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THE GREATEST ENGLISH CLASSIC

A STUDY OF THE
KING JAMES VERSION OF THE BIBLE
AND ITS INFLUENCE ON LIFE
AND LITERATURE

BY

CLELAND BOYD McAFEE, D.D.

AUTHOR OF
"THE GROWING CHURCH" "MOSAIC LAW IN MODERN LIFE"
"STUDIES IN THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT"

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PREFACE

THE lectures included in this volume were prepared at the request of the Brooklyn Institute of Arts and Sciences, and were delivered in the early part of 1912, under its auspices. They were suggested by the tercentenary of the King James version of the Bible. The plan adopted led to a restatement of the history which prepared for the version, and of that which produced it. It was natural next to point out its principal characteristics as a piece of literature. Two lectures followed, noting its influence on literature and on history. The course closed with a statement and argument regarding the place of the Bible in the life of to-day.

The reception accorded the lectures at the time of their public delivery, and the discussion which ensued upon some of the points raised, encourage the hope that they may be more widely useful.

It is a pleasure to assign to Dr. Franklin W. Hooper, director of the Institute, whatever credit the work may merit. Certainly it would not have been undertaken without his kindly urgency.

CLELAND BOYD MCAFEE.

Brooklyn, New York, May, 1912.

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LECTURE I

PREPARING THE WAY—THE ENGLISH BIBLE BEFORE KING JAMES

THERE are three great Book-religions—Judaism, Christianity, and Mohammedanism. Other religions have their sacred writings, but they do not hold them in the same regard as do these three. Buddhism and Confucianism count their books rather records of their faith than rules for it, history rather than authoritative sources of belief. The three great Book-religions yield a measure of authority to their sacred books which would be utterly foreign to the thought of other faiths.

Yet among the three named are two very distinct attitudes. To the Mohammedan the language as well as the matter of the Koran is

sacred. He will not permit its translation. Its original Arabic is the only authoritative tongue in which it can speak. It has been translated into other tongues, but always by adherents of other faiths, never by its own believers. The Hebrew and the Christian, on the other hand, but notably the Christian, have persistently sought to make their Bible speak all languages at all times.

It is a curious fact that a Book written in one tongue should have come to its largest power in other languages than its own. The Bible means more to-day in German and French and English than it does in Hebrew and Chaldaic and Greek—more even than it ever meant in those languages. There is nothing just like that in literary history. It is as though Shakespeare should after a while become negligible for most readers in English, and be a master of thought in Chinese and Hindustani, or in some language yet unborn.

We owe this persistent effort to make the Bible speak the language of the times to a conviction that the particular language used is not the great thing, that there is something in it which gives it power and value in any tongue. No book was ever translated so often. Men who have known it in its earliest tongues have realized that their fellows would not learn these earliest

tongues, and they have set out to make it speak the tongue their fellows did know. Some have protested that there is impiety in making it speak the current tongue, and have insisted that men should learn the earliest speech, or at least accept their knowledge of the Book from those who did know it. But they have never stopped the movement. They have only delayed it.

The first movement to make the Scripture speak the current tongue appeared nearly three centuries before Christ. Most of the Old Testament then existed in Hebrew. But the Jews had scattered widely. Many had gathered in Egypt where Alexander the Great had founded the city that bears his name. At one time a third of the population of the city was Jewish. Many of the people were passionately loyal to their old religion and its Sacred Book. But the current tongue there and through most of the civilized world was Greek, and not Hebrew. As always, there were some who felt that the Book and its original language were inseparable. Others revealed the disposition of which we spoke a moment ago, and set out to make the Book speak the current tongue. For one hundred and fifty years the work went on, and what we call the Septuagint was completed. There is a pretty little story which tells how the version got its

name, which means the Seventy — that King Ptolemy Philadelphus, interested in collecting all sacred books, gathered seventy Hebrew scholars, sent them to the island of Pharos, shut them up in seventy rooms for seventy days, each making a translation from the Hebrew into the Greek. When they came out, behold, their translations were all exactly alike! Several difficulties appear in that story, one of which is that seventy men should have made the same mistakes without depending on each other. In addition, it is not historically supported, and the fact seems to be that the Septuagint was a long and slow growth, issuing from the impulse to make the Sacred Book speak the familiar tongue. And, though it was a Greek translation, it virtually displaced the original, as the English Bible has virtually displaced the Hebrew and Greek to-day. The Septuagint was the Old Testament which Paul used. Of one hundred and sixty-eight direct quotations from the Old Testament in the New nearly all are from the Greek version—from the translation, and not from the original.

We owe still more to translation. While there is accumulating evidence that there was spoken in Palestine at that time a colloquial Greek, with which most people would be familiar, it is yet probable that our Lord spoke neither Greek

nor Hebrew currently, but Aramaic. He knew the Hebrew Scriptures, of course, as any well-trained lad did; but most of His words have come down to us in translation. His name, for example, to His Hebrew mother, was not Jesus, but Joshua; and Jesus is the translation of the Hebrew Joshua into Greek. We have His words as they were translated by His disciples into the Greek, in which the New Testament was originally written.

By the time the writing of the New Testament was completed, say one hundred years after Christ, while Greek was still current speech, the Roman Empire was so dominant that the common people were talking Latin almost as much as Greek, and gradually, because political power was behind it, the Latin gained on the Greek, and became virtually the speech of the common people. The movement to make the Bible talk the language of the time appeared again. It is impossible to say now when the first translations into Latin were made. Certainly there were some within two centuries after Christ, and by 250 A.D. a whole Bible in Latin was in circulation in the Roman Empire. The translation of the New Testament was from the Greek, of course, but so was that of the Old Testament, and the Latin versions of the Old Testa-

ment were, therefore, translations of a translation.

There were so many of these versions, and they were so unequal in value, that there was natural demand for a Latin translation that should be authoritative. So came into being what we call the Vulgate, whose very name indicates the desire to get the Bible into the vulgar or common tongue. Jerome began by revising the earlier Latin translations, but ended by going back of all translations to the original Greek, and back of the Septuagint to the original Hebrew wherever he could do so. Fourteen years he labored, settling himself in Bethlehem, in Palestine, to do his work the better. Barely four hundred years (404 A.D.) after the birth of Christ his Latin version appeared. It met a storm of protest for its effort to go back of the Septuagint, so dominant had the translation become. Jerome fought for it, and his version won the day, and became the authoritative Latin translation of the Bible.

For seven or eight centuries it held its sway as the current version nearest to the tongue of the people. Latin had become the accepted tongue of the church. There was little general culture, there was little general acquaintance with the Bible except among the educated.

During all that time there was no real room for a further translation. One of the writers[1] says: "Medieval England was quite unripe for a Bible in the mother tongue; while the illiterate majority were in no condition to feel the want of such a book, the educated minority would be averse to so great and revolutionary a change." When a man cannot read any writing it really does not matter to him whether books are in current speech or not, and the majority of the people for those seven or eight centuries could read nothing at all. Those who could read anything were apt to be able to read the Latin.

These centuries added to the conviction of many that the Bible ought not to become too common, that it should not be read by everybody, that it required a certain amount of learning to make it safe reading. They came to feel that it is as important to have an authoritative interpretation of the Bible as to have the Bible itself. When the movement began to make it speak the new English tongue, it provoked the most violent opposition. Latin had been good enough for a millennium; why cheapen the Bible by a translation? There had grown up a feeling that Jerome himself had been inspired. He had been canonized, and half the references to him

[1] Hoare, *Evolution of the English Bible*, p. 39.

in that time speak of him as the inspired translator. Criticism of his version was counted as impious and profane as criticisms of the original text could possibly have been. It is one of the ironies of history that the version for which Jerome had to fight, and which was counted a piece of impiety itself, actually became the ground on which men stood when they fought against another version, counting anything else but this very version an impious intrusion!

How early the movement for an English Bible began, it is impossible now to say. Certainly just before 700 A.D., that first singer of the English tongue, Cædmon, had learned to paraphrase the Bible. We may recall the Venerable Bede's charming story of him, and how he came by his power of interpretation. Bede himself was a child when Cædmon died, and the romance of the story makes it one of the finest in our literature. Cædmon was a peasant, a farm laborer in Northumbria working on the lands of the great Abbey at Whitby. Already he had passed middle life, and no spark of genius had flashed in him. He loved to go to the festive gatherings and hear the others sing their improvised poems; but, when the harp came around to him in due course, he would leave the room, for he could not sing. One night when he had slipped away

from the group in shame and had made his rounds of the horses and cattle under his care, he fell asleep in the stable building, and heard a voice in his sleep bidding him sing. When he declared he could not, the voice still bade him sing. "What shall I sing?" he asked. "Sing the first beginning of created things." And the words came to him; and, still dreaming, he sang his first hymn to the Creator. In the morning he told his story, and the Lady Abbess found that he had the divine gift. The monks had but to translate to him bits of the Bible out of the Latin, which he did not understand, into his familiar Anglo-Saxon tongue, and he would cast it into the rugged Saxon measures which could be sung by the common people. So far as we can tell, it was so that the Bible story became current in Anglo-Saxon speech. Bede himself certainly put the Gospel of John into Anglo-Saxon. At the Bodleian Library, at Oxford, there is a manuscript of nearly twenty thousand lines, the metrical version of the Gospel and the Acts, done near 1250 by an Augustinian monk named Orm, and so called the Ormulum. There were other metrical versions of various parts of the Bible. Midway between Bede and Orm came Langland's poem, "The Vision of Piers Plowman,"

which paraphrased so much of the Scripture.

Yet the fact is that until the last quarter of the fourteenth century there was no prose version of the Bible in the English language. Indeed, there was only coming to be an English language. It was gradually emerging, taking definite shape and form, so that it could be distinguished from the earlier Norman French, Saxon, and Anglo-Saxon, in which so much of it is rooted.

As soon as the language grew definite enough, it was inevitable that two things should come to pass. First, that some men would attempt to make a colloquial version of the Bible; and, secondly, that others would oppose it. One can count with all confidence on these two groups of men, marching through history like the animals into the ark, two and two. Some men propose, others oppose. They are built on those lines.

We are more concerned with the men who made the versions; but we must think a moment of the others. One of his contemporaries, Knighton, may speak for all in his saying of Wiclif, that he had, to be sure, translated the Gospel into the Anglic tongue, but that it had thereby been made vulgar by him, and more open to the

reading of laymen and women than it usually is to the knowledge of lettered and intelligent clergy, and "thus the pearl is cast abroad and trodden under the feet of swine"; and, that we may not be in doubt who are the swine, he adds: "The jewel of the Church is turned into the common sport of the people."

But two strong impulses drive thoughtful men to any effort that will secure wide knowledge of the Bible One is their love of the Bible and their belief in it; but the other, dominant then and now, is a sense of the need of their own time. It cannot be too strongly urged that the two great pioneers of English Bible translation, Wiclif and Tindale, more than a century apart, were chiefly moved to their work by social conditions. No one could read the literature of the times of which we are speaking without smiling at our assumption that we are the first who have cared for social needs. We talk about the past as the age of the individual, and the present as the social age. Our fathers, we say, cared only to be saved themselves, and had no concern for the evils of society. They believed in rescuing one here and another there, while we have come to see the wisdom of correcting the conditions that ruin men, and so saving men in the mass. There must be some basis of

truth for that, since we say it so confidently; but it can be much over-accented. There were many of our fathers, and of our grandfathers, who were mightily concerned with the mass of people, and looked as carefully as we do for a corrective of social evils. Wiclif, in the late fourteenth century, and Tindale, in the early sixteenth, were two such men. The first English translations of the Bible were fruits of the social impulse.

Wiclif was impressed with the chasm that was growing between the church and the people, and felt that a wider and fuller knowledge of the Bible would be helpful for the closing of the chasm. It is a familiar remark of Miss Jane Addams that the cure for the evils of democracy is more democracy. Wiclif believed that the cure for the evils of religion is more religion, more intelligent religion. He found a considerable feeling that the best things in religion ought to be kept from most people, since they could not be trusted to understand them. His own feeling was that the best things in religion are exactly the things most people ought to know most about; that people had better handle the Bible carelessly, mistakenly, than be shut out from it by any means whatever. We owe the first English translation to a faith

that the Bible is a book of emancipation for the mind and for the political life.

John Wiclif himself was a scholar of Oxford, master of that famous Balliol College which has had such a list of distinguished masters. He was an adviser of Edward III. Twenty years after his death a younger contemporary (W. Thorpe) said that "he was considered by many to be the most holy of all the men of his age. He was of emaciated frame, spare, and well nigh destitute of strength. He was absolutely blameless in his conduct." And even that same Knighton who accused him of casting the Church's pearl before swine says that in philosophy "he came to be reckoned inferior to none of his time."

But it was not at Oxford that he came to know common life so well and to sense the need for a new social influence. He came nearer to it when he was rector of the parish at Lutterworth. As scholar and rector he set going the two great movements which leave his name in history One was his securing, training, and sending out a band of itinerant preachers or "poor priests" to gather the people in fields and byways and to preach the simple truths of the Christian religion. They were unpaid, and lived by the kindness of the common peo-

ple. They came to be called Lollards, though the origin of the name is obscure. Their followers received the same name. A few years after Wiclif's death an enemy bitterly observed that if you met any two men one was sure to be a Lollard. It was the "first time in English history that an appeal had been made to the people instead of the scholars." Religion was to be made rather a matter of practical life than of dogma or of ritual. The "poor priests" in their cheap brown robes became a mighty religious force, and evoked opposition from the Church powers. A generation after Wiclif's death they had become a mighty political force in the controversy between the King and the Pope. As late as 1521 five hundred Lollards were arrested in London by the bishop.[1] Wiclif's purpose, however, was to reach and help the common people with the simpler, and therefore the most fundamental, truths of religion.

The other movement which marks Wiclif's name concerns us more; but it was connected with the first. He set out to give the common people the full text of the Bible for their common use, and to encourage them not only in reading it, if already they could read, but in learning to read that they might read it. Tennyson com-

[1] Muir, *Our Grand Old Bible*, p. 24.

pares the village of Lutterworth to that of Bethlehem, on the ground that if Christ, the Word of God, was born at Bethlehem, the Word of Life was born again at Lutterworth.[1] The translation was from the Vulgate, and Wiclif probably did little of the actual work himself, yet it is all his work. And in 1382, more than five centuries ago, there appeared the first complete English version of the Bible. Wiclif made it the people's Book, and the English people were the first of the modern nations to whom the Bible as a whole was given in their own familiar tongue. Once it got into their hands they have never let it be taken entirely away.

Of course, all this was before the days of printing, and copies were made by hand only. Yet there were very many of them. One hundred and fifty manuscripts, in whole or in part, are extant still, a score of them of the original version, the others of the revision at once undertaken by John Purvey, Wiclif's disciple. The copies belonging to Edward VI. and Queen Elizabeth are both still in existence, and both show much use. Twenty years after it was

[1] "Not least art thou, thou little Bethlehem
In Judah, for in thee the Lord was born;
Nor thou in Britain, little Lutterworth,
Least, for in thee the word was born again."
—*Sir John Oldcastle.*

completed copies were counted very valuable, though they were very numerous. It was not uncommon for a single complete manuscript copy of the Wiclif version to be sold for one hundred and fifty or two hundred dollars, and Foxe, whose *Book of Martyrs* we used to read as children, tells that a load of hay was given for the use of a New Testament one hour a day.

It would be difficult to exaggerate the influence of this gift to the English people. It constitutes the standard of Middle English. Chaucer and Wiclif stood side by side. It is true that Chaucer himself accepted Wiclif's teaching, and some of the wise men think that the "parson" of whom he speaks so finely as one who taught the lore of Christ and His apostles twelve, but first followed it himself, was Wiclif. But the version had far more than literary influence; it had tremendous power in keeping alive in England that spirit of free inquiry which is the only safeguard of free institutions. Here was the entire source of the Christian faith available for the judgment of common men, and they became at once judges of religious and political dogma. Dr. Ladd thinks it was not the reading of the Bible which produced the Reformation; it was the Reformation itself which procured the read-

ing of the Bible.[1] But Dr. Rashdall and Professor Pollard and others are right when they insist that the English Reformation received less from Luther than from the secret reading of the Scripture over the whole country. What we call the English spirit of free inquiry was fostered and developed by Wiclif and his Lollards with the English Scripture in their hands. Out of it has grown as out of no other one root the freedom of the English and American people.

This work of Wiclif deserves the time we have given it because it asserted a principle for the English people. There was much yet to be done before entire freedom was gained. At Oxford, in the Convocation of 1408, it was solemnly voted: "We decree and ordain that no man hereafter by his own authority translate any text of the Scripture into English, or any other tongue, by way of a book, pamphlet, or other treatise; but that no man read any such book, pamphlet, or treatise now lately composed in the time of John Wiclif . . . until the said translation be approved by the orderly of the place." But it was too late. It is always too late to overtake a liberating idea once it gets free. Tolstoi tells of Batenkoff, the Russian nihilist, that after he was seized and con-

[1] *What Is the Bible?*, p. 45.

fined in his cell he was heard to laugh loudly; and, when they asked him the cause of his mirth, he said that he could not fail to be amused at the absurdity of the situation. "They have caught me," he said, "and shut me up here; but my ideas are out yonder in the streets and in the fields, absolutely free. They cannot overtake them." It was already too late, twenty years after Wiclif's version was available, to stop the English people in their search for religious truth.

In the century just after the Wiclif translation, two great events occurred which bore heavily on the spread of the Bible. One was the revival of learning, which made popular again the study of the classics and the classical languages. Critical and exact Greek scholarship became again a possibility. Remember that Wiclif did not know Greek nor Hebrew, did not need to know them to be the foremost scholar of Oxford in the fourteenth century. Even as late as 1502 there was no professor of Greek at the proud University of Erfurt when Luther was a student there. It was after he became a doctor of divinity and a university professor that he learned Greek in order to be a better Bible student, and his young friend Philip Melancthon was the first to teach Greek in

the University.[1] But under the influence of Erasmus and his kind, with their new insistence on classical learning, there came necessarily a new appraisal of the Vulgate as a translation of the original Bible. For a thousand years there had been no new study of the original Bible languages in Europe. The Latin of the Vulgate had become as sacred as the Book itself. But the revival of learning threw scholarship back on the sources of the text. Erasmus and others published versions of the Greek Testament which were disturbing to the Vulgate as a final version.

The other great event of that same century was the invention of printing with movable type. It was in 1455 that Gutenberg printed his first book, an edition of the Vulgate, now called the Mazarin Bible. The bearing of the invention on the spread of common knowledge is beyond description. It is rather late to be praising the art of printing, and we need spend little time doing so; but one can see instantly how it affected the use of the Bible. It made it worth while to learn to read—there would be something to read. It made it worth while to write—there would be some one to read what was written.

[1] McGiffert, *Martin Luther.*

One hundred years exactly after the death of Wiclif, William Tindale was born. He was eight years old when Columbus discovered America. He had already taken a degree at Oxford, and was a student in Cambridge when Luther posted his theses at Wittenburg. Erasmus either was a teacher at Cambridge when Tindale was a student there, or had just left. Sir Thomas More and Erasmus were close friends, and More's *Utopia* and Erasmus's Greek New Testament appeared the same year, probably while Tindale was a student at Cambridge.

But he came at a troubled time. The new learning had no power to deepen or strengthen the moral life of the people. It could not make religion a vital thing. Morality and religion were far separated. The priests and curates were densely ignorant. We need not ask Tindale what was the condition. Ask Bellarmine, a cardinal of the Church: "Some years before the rise of the Lutheran heresy there was almost an entire abandonment of equity in ecclesiastical judgments; in morals, no discipline; in sacred literature, no erudition; in divine things, no reverence; religion was almost extinct." Or ask Erasmus, who never broke with the Church: "What man of real piety does not perceive with

sighs that this is far the most corrupt of all ages? When did iniquity abound with more licentiousness? When was charity so cold?" And, as a century before, Wiclif had felt the social need for a popular version of the Bible, so William Tindale felt it now. He saw the need as great among the clergy of the time as among the laity. In one of his writings he says: "If you will not let the layman have the word of God in his mother tongue, yet let the priests have it, which for the great part of them do understand no Latin at all, but sing and patter all day with the lips only that which the heart understandeth not." [1] So bad was the case that it was not corrected within a whole generation. Forty years after Tindale's version was published, the Bishop of Gloucester, Hooper by name, made an examination of the clergy of his diocese. There were 311 of them. He found 168, more than half, unable to repeat the Ten Commandments; 31 who did not even know where they could be found; 40 who could not repeat the Lord's Prayer; and nearly as many who did not know where it originated; yet they were all in regular standing as clergy in the diocese of Gloucester. The need was keen enough.

[1] *Obedience of a Christian Man.*

About 1523 Tindale began to cast the Scriptures into the current English. He set out to London fully expecting to find support and encouragement there, but he found neither. He found, as he once said, that there was no room in the palace of the Bishop of London to translate the New Testament; indeed, that there was no place to do it in all England. A wealthy London merchant subsidized him with the munificent gift of ten pounds, with which he went across the Channel to Hamburg; and there and elsewhere on the Continent, where he could be hid, he brought his translation to completion. Printing facilities were greater on the Continent than in England; but there was such opposition to his work that very few copies of the several editions of which we know can still be found. Tindale was compelled to flee at one time with a few printed sheets and complete his work on another press. Several times copies of his books were solemnly burned, and his own life was frequently in danger.

There is one amusing story which tells how money came to free Tindale from heavy debt and prepare the way for more Bibles. The Bishop of London, Tunstall, was set on destroying copies of the English New Testament. He therefore made a bargain with a merchant of

Antwerp, Packington, to secure them for him. Packington was a friend of Tindale, and went to him forthwith, saying: "William, I know thou art a poor man, and I have gotten thee a merchant for thy books." "Who?" asked Tindale. "The Bishop of London." "Ah, but he will burn them." "So he will, but you will have the money." And it all came out as it was planned; the Bishop of London had the books, Packington had the thanks, Tindale had the money, the debt was paid, and the new edition was soon ready. The old document, from which I am quoting, adds that the Bishop thought he had God by the toe when, indeed, he found afterward that he had the devil by the fist.[1]

The final revision of the Tindale translations was published in 1534, and that becomes the notable year of his life. In two years he was put to death by strangling, and his body was burned. When we remember that this was done with the joint power of Church and State, we realize some of the odds against which he worked.

Spite of his odds, however, Tindale is the real father of our King James version. About eighty per cent. of his Old Testament and ninety per

[1] Pollard, *Records of the English Bible*, p. 151.

cent. of his New Testament have been transferred to our version. In the Beatitudes, for example, five are word for word in the two versions, while the other three are only slightly changed.[1] Dr. Davidson has calculated that nine-tenths of the words in the shorter New Testament epistles are Tindale's, and in the longer epistles like the Hebrews five-sixths are his. Froude's estimate is fair: "Of the translation itself, though since that time it has been many times revised and altered, we may say that it is substantially the Bible with which we are familiar. The peculiar genius which breathes through it, the mingled tenderness and majesty, the Saxon simplicity, the preternatural grandeur, unequaled, unapproached, in the attempted improvements of modern scholars, all are here, and bear the impress of the mind of one man, William Tindale."[2]

We said a moment ago that Wiclif's translation was the standard of Middle English. It is time to add that Tindale's version "fixed our standard English once for all, and brought it finally into every English home." The revisers

[1] The fourth reads in his version, "Blessed are they which hunger and thirst for rightcousness"; the seventh, "Blessed are the maintaincrs of peace"; the eighth, "Blessed are they which suffer persecution for righteousness' sake."

[2] *History of England*, end of chap. xii.

of 1881 declared that while the authorized version was the work of many hands, the foundation of it was laid by Tindale, and that the versions that followed it were substantially reproductions of Tindale's, or revisions of versions which were themselves almost entirely based on it.

There was every reason why it should be a worthy version. For one thing, it was the first translation into English from the original Hebrew and Greek. Wiclif's had been from the Latin. For Tindale there were available two new and critical Greek Testaments, that of Erasmus and the so-called Complutensian, though he used that of Erasmus chiefly. There was also available a carefully prepared Hebrew Old Testament. For another thing, it was the first version which could be printed, and so be subject to easy and immediate correction and revision. Then also, Tindale himself was a great scholar in the languages. He was "so skilled in the seven languages, Hebrew, Greek, Latin, Italian, Spanish, English, and French, that, whichever he spoke, you would suppose it was his native tongue."[1] Nor was his spirit in the work controversial. I say his "spirit in the work" with care. They were controversial

[1] Herman Buschius.

times, and Tindale took his share in the verbal warfare. When, for example, there was objection to making any English version because "the language was so rude that the Bible could not be intelligently translated into it," Tindale replied: "It is not so rude as they are false liars. For the Greek tongue agreeth more with the English than with the Latin, a thousand parts better may it be translated into the English than into the Latin." [1] And when a high church dignitary protested to Tindale against making the Bible so common, he replied: "If God spare my life, ere many years I will cause a boy that driveth a plow shall know more of the Scriptures than thou dost." And while that was not saying much for the plowboy, it was saying a good deal to the dignitary. In language, Tindale was controversial enough, but in his spirit, in making his version, there was no element of controversy. For such reasons as these we might expect the version to be valuable.

All this while, and especially between the time

[1] This will mean the more to us when we realize that the literary men of the day despised the English tongue. Sir Thomas More wrote his *Utopia* in Latin, because otherwise educated men would not deign to read it. Years later Roger Ascham apologized for writing one of his works in English. Putting the Bible into current English impressed these literary men very much as we would be impressed by putting the Bible into current slang.

when Tindale first published his New Testament and the time they burned him for doing so, an interesting change was going on in England. The King was Henry VIII., who was by no means a willing Protestant. As Luther's work appeared, it was this same Henry who wrote the pamphlet against him during the Diet of Worms, and on the ground of this pamphlet, with its loyal support of the Church against Luther, he received from the Roman pontiff the title "Defender of the Faith," which the kings of England still wear. And yet under this king this strange succession of dates can be given. Notice them closely. In 1526 Tindale's New Testament was burned at St. Paul's by the Bishop of London; ten years later, 1536, Tindale himself was burned with the knowledge and connivance of the English government; and yet, one year later, 1537, two versions of the Bible in English, three-quarters of which were the work of Tindale, were licensed for public use by the King of England, and were required to be made available for the people! Eleven years after the New Testament was burned, one year after Tindale was burned, that crown was set on his work! What brought this about?

Three facts help to explain it. First, the recent years of Bible translation were having

their weight. The fugitive copies of the Bible were doing their work. Spite of the sharp opposition fifty thousand copies of Tindale's various editions had actually been published and circulated. Men were reading them; they were approving them. The more they read, the less reason they saw for hiding the Book from the people. Why should it not be made common and free? There was strong Lutheran opinion in the universities. It was already a custom for English teachers to go to Germany for minute scholarship. They came back with German Bibles in Luther's version and with Greek Testaments, and the young scholars who were being raised up felt the influence, consciously or unconsciously, of the free use of the Bible which ruled in many German universities.

The second fact that helps to explain the sudden change of attitude toward the Bible is this: the people of England were never willingly ruled from without, religiously or politically. There has recently been a considerable controversy over the history of the Established Church of England, whether it has always been an independent church or was at one time officially a part of the Roman Church. That is a matter for ecclesiastical history to determine. The foundation fact, however, is as I

worded it a moment ago: the people of England were never willingly ruled from without, religiously or politically. They were sometimes ruled from without; but they were either indifferent to it at the time or rebellious against it. Those who did think claimed the right to think for themselves. The Scotch of the north were peculiarly so, but the English of the south claimed the same right. There has always been an immense contrast between the two sides of the British Channel. The French people during all those years were deeply loyal to a foreign religious government. The English people were never so, not in the days of the fullest Roman supremacy. They always demanded at least a form of home government. That made England a congenial home for the Protestant spirit, which claimed the right to independent study of the sources of religion and independent judgment regarding them. It was only a continuance of the spirit of Wiclif and the Lollards. The spirit in a nation lives long, especially when it is passed down by tradition. Those were not the days of newspapers. They were instead the days of great meetings, more important still of small family gatherings, where the memory of the older men was called into use, and where boys and girls drank in eagerly the traditions

of their own country as expressed in the great events of their history. Newspapers never can fully take the place of those gatherings, for they do not bring men together to feel the thrill of the story that is told. It must be remembered that the entire population of England at that time was only about three millions. And that old spirit of independence was strongly at work in the middle-class villages and among the merchants, and they were a ruling and dominant class. That was second, that in those ten years there asserted itself the age-long unwillingness of the English people to be ruled from without.

The third fact which must be taken into account to explain this remarkable change of front of the public English life is Henry VIII. himself. There is much about him that no country would willingly claim. He was the most habitual bridegroom in English history; he had an almost confirmed habit of beheading his wives or otherwise ridding himself of them. Yet many traits made him a typical outstanding Englishman. He had the characteristic spirit of independence, the resentment of foreign control, satisfaction with his own land, the feeling that of course it is the best land. There are no people in the world so well satisfied with their own country as the people of England or the

British Isles. They are critical of many things in their own government until they begin to compare it with other countries; they must make their changes on their own lines. The pamphlet of Henry VIII., which won him the title of Defender of the Faith, praised the pope; and, though Sir Thomas More urged him to change his expressions lest he should live to regret them, he would not change them. But that was while the pope was serving his wishes and what he felt was England's good.

There arose presently the question, or the several questions, about his marriage. It sheds no glory on Henry VIII. that they arose as they did; but his treatment of them must not be mistaken. He was concerned to have his marriage to Anne Boleyn confirmed, and there are some who think he was honest in believing it ought to be confirmed, though we need not believe that. What happened was that for the first time Henry VIII. found that as sovereign of England he must take commands from a foreign power, a power exercising temporal sovereignty exactly as he did, but adding to it a claim to spiritual power, a claim to determine his conduct for him and to absolve his people from loyalty to him if he was not obedient. It arose over the question of his divorce, but it might

have arisen over anything else. It was limitation on his sovereignty in England. And he let it be seen that all questions that pertain to England were to be settled in England, and not in another land. He would rather have a matter settled wrong in England than settled right elsewhere. That is how he claimed to be head of the English Church. The people back of him had always held to the belief that they were governed from within, though they were linked to religion from without. He executed their theory. That assertion of English sovereignty came during the eventful years of which we are speaking.

Here, then, are our great facts. First, thoughtful opinion wanted the Bible made available, and at a convention of bishops and university men the King was requested to secure the issuance of a proper translation. Secondly, the people wanted it, the more because it would gratify their English instinct of independent judgment in matters of religion. Thirdly, the King granted it without yielding his personal religious position, in assertion of his human sovereignty within his own realm.

So England awoke one morning in 1537 to discover that it had a translation of the Bible, two of them actually, open to its use, the very

thing that had been forbidden yesterday! And that, one year after Tindale had been burned in loyal France for issuing an English translation! Two versions were now authorized and made available. What were they? That of Miles Coverdale, which had been issued secretly two years before, and that known as the "Matthew" Bible, though the name has no significance, issued within a year. Details are not to our purpose. Neither was an independent work, but was made largely from the Latin and the German, and much influenced by Tindale. Coverdale was a Yorkshire man like Wiclif, feminine in his mental cast as Tindale was masculine. Coverdale made his translation because he loved books; Tindale because he felt driven to it. But now the way was clear, and other editions appeared. It is natural to name one or two of the more notable ones.

There appeared what is known as the Great Bible in 1539. It was only another version made by Coverdale on the basis of the Matthew version, but corrected by more accurate knowledge. There is an interesting romance of its publication. The presses of England were not adequate for the great work planned; it was to be a marvel of typography. So the consent of King Francis was gained to have it printed in

France, and Coverdale was sent as a special ambassador to oversee it. He was in dread of the Inquisition, which was in vogue at the time, and sent off his printed sheets to England as rapidly as possible. Suddenly one day the order of confiscation came from the Inquisitor-General. Only Coverdale's official position as representing the King saved his own life. As for the printed sheets on which so much depended, they seemed doomed. But in the nick of time a dealer appeared at the printing-house and purchased four great vats full of waste paper which he shipped to England—when it was found that the waste paper was those printed sheets. The presses and the printers were all loyal to England, and the edition was finally completed. The Great Bible was issued to meet a decree that each church should make available in some convenient place the largest possible copy of the whole Bible, where all the parishioners could have access to it and read it at their will. The version gets its name solely from the size of the volume. That decree dates 1538, twelve years after Tindale's books were burned, and two years after he was burned! The installation of these great books caused tremendous excitement—crowds gathered everywhere. Bishop Bonner caused six copies of the great volume

to be located wisely throughout St. Paul's. He found it difficult to make people leave them during the sermons. He was so often interrupted by voices reading to a group, and by the discussions that ensued, that he threatened to have them taken out during the service if people would not be quiet. The Great Bible appeared in seven editions in two years, and continued in recognized power for thirty years. Much of the present English prayer-book is taken from it.

But this liberty was so sudden that the people naturally abused it. Henry became vexed because the sacred words "were disputed, rimed, sung, and jangled in every ale-house." There had grown up a series of wild ballads and ribald songs in contempt of "the old faith," while it was not really the old faith which was in dispute, but only foreign control of English faith. They had mistaken Henry's meaning. So Henry began to put restrictions on the use of the Bible. There were to be no notes or annotations in any versions, and those that existed were to be blacked out. Only the upper classes were to be allowed to possess a Bible. Finally, the year before his death, all versions were prohibited except the Great Bible, whose cost and size precluded secret use. The decree

led to another great burning of Bibles in 1546—Tindale, Coverdale, Matthew—all but the Great Bible. The leading religious reformers took flight and fled to European Protestant towns like Frankfort and Strassburg. But the Bible remained. Henry VIII. died. The Bible lived on.

Under Edward VI., the boy king, coming to the throne at nine and dying at fifteen, the regency with Crammer at its head earned its bad name. But while its members were shamelessly despoiling churches and enriching themselves they did one great service for the Bible. They cast off all restrictions on its translation and publication. The order for a Great Bible in every church was renewed, and there was to be added to it a copy of Erasmus's paraphrase of the four gospels. Nearly fifty editions of the Bible, in whole or in part, appeared in those six years.

And that was fortunate, for then came Mary—and the deluge. Of course, she again gave in the nominal allegiance of England to the Roman control. But she utterly missed the spirit of the people. They were weary with the excesses of rabid Protestantism; but they were by no means ready to admit the principle of foreign control in religious matters. They might have

been willing, many of them, that the use of the Bible should be restricted, if it were done by their own sovereign. They were not willing that another sovereign should restrict them. So the secret use of the Bible increased. Martyr fires were kindled, but by the light of them the people read their Bibles more eagerly. And this very persecution led to one of the best of the early versions of the Bible, indirectly even to the King James version.

The flower of English Protestant scholarship was driven into exile, and found its way to Frankfort and Geneva again. There the spirit of scholarship was untrammeled; there they found material for scholarly study of the Bible, and there they made and published a new version of the Bible in English, by all means the best that had been made. In later years, under Elizabeth, it drove the Great Bible off the field by sheer power of excellence. During her reign sixty editions of it appeared. This was the version called the Genevan Bible. It made several changes that are familiar to us. For one thing, in the Genevan edition of 1560 first appeared our familiar division into verses. The chapter division was made three centuries earlier; but the verses belong to the Genevan version, and are divided to make the Book suitable for re-

sponsive use and for readier reference. It was taken in large part from the work of Robert Stephens, who had divided the Greek Testament into verses, ten years earlier, during a journey which he was compelled to make between Paris and Lyons. The Genevan version also abandoned the old black letter, and used the Roman type with which we are familiar. It had full notes on hard passages, which notes, as we shall see, helped to produce the King James version. The work itself was completed after the accession of Elizabeth, when most of the religious leaders had returned to England from their exile under Mary.

Elizabeth herself was not an ardent Protestant, not ardent at all religiously, but an ardent Englishwoman. She understood her people, and while she prided herself on being the "Guardian of the Middle Way," she did not make the mistake of submitting her sovereignty to foreign supervision. Probably Elizabeth always counted herself personally a Catholic, but not politically subject to the Roman pontiff. She had no wish to offend other Catholic powers; but she was determined to develop a strong national spirit and to allow religious differences to exist if they would be peaceful. The dramatic scene which was enacted at the time of

her coronation procession was typical of her spirit. As the procession passed down Cheapside, a venerable old man, representing Time, with a little child beside him representing Truth—Time always old, Truth always young—presented the Queen with a copy of the Scriptures, which she accepted, promising to read them diligently.

Presently it was found that two versions of the Bible were taking the field, the old Great Bible and the new Genevan Bible. On all accounts the Genevan was the better and was driving out its rival. Yet there could be no hope of gaining the approval of Elizabeth for the Genevan Bible. For one thing, John Knox had been a party to its preparation; so had Calvin. Elizabeth detested them both, especially Knox. For another thing, its notes were not favorable to royal sovereignty, but smacked so much of popular government as to be offensive. For another thing, though it had been made mostly by her own people, it had been made in a foreign land, and was under suspicion on that account. The result was that Elizabeth's archbishop, Parker, set out to have an authorized version made, selected a revision committee, with instructions to follow wherever possible the Great Bible, to avoid bitter notes,

and to make such a version that it might be freely, easily, and naturally read. The result is known as the Bishops' Bible. It was issued in Elizabeth's tenth year (1568), but there is no record that she ever noticed it, though Parker sent her a copy from his sick-bed. The Bishops' Bible shows the influence of the Genevan Bible in many ways, though it gives no credit for that. It is not of equal merit; it was expensive, too cumbersome, and often unscholarly. Only its official standing gave it life, and after forty years, in nineteen editions, it was no longer published.

Naming one other English version will complete the series of facts necessary for the consideration of the forming of the King James version. It will be remembered that all the English versions of the Bible thus far mentioned were the work of men either already out of favor with the Roman pontiff, or speedily put out of favor on that account. Thirty years after his death, Wiclif's bones were taken up and burned; Tindale was burned. Coverdale's version and the Great Bible were the product of the period when Henry VIII. was under the ban. The Genevan Bible was the work of refugees, and the Bishops' Bible was prepared when Elizabeth had been excommunicated. That fact

seemed to many loyal Roman churchmen to put the Church in a false light. It must be made clear that its opposition was not to the Bible, not even to popular use and possession of the Bible, but only to unauthorized, even incorrect, versions. So there came about the Douai version, instigated by Gregory Martin, and prepared in some sense as an answer to the Genevan version and its strongly anti-papal notes. It was the work of English scholars connected with the University of Douai. The New Testament was issued at Rheims in 1582, and the whole Bible in 1609, just before our King James version. It is made, not from the Hebrew and the Greek, though it refers to both, but from the Vulgate. The result is that the Old Testament of the Douai version is a translation into English from the Latin, which in large part is a translation into Latin from the Greek Septuagint, which in turn is a translation into Greek from the Hebrew. Yet scholars are scholars, and it shows marked influence of the Genevan version, and, indeed, of other English versions. Its notes were strongly anti-Protestant, and in its preface it explains its existence by saying that Protestants have been guilty of "casting the holy to dogs and pearls to hogs."

The version is not in the direct line of the

ascent of the familiar version, and needs no elaborate description. Its purpose was controversial; it did not go to available sources; its English was not colloquial, but ecclesiastical. For example, in the Lord's Prayer we read: "Give us this day our supersubstantial bread," instead of "our daily bread." In Hebrews xiii: 17, the version reads, "Obey your prelates and be subject unto them." In Luke iii:3, John came "preaching the baptism of penance." In Psalm xxiii:5, where we read, "My cup runneth over," the Douai version reads, "My chalice which inebriateth me, how goodly it is." There is a careful retention of ecclesiastical terms, and an explanation of the passages on which Protestants had come to differ rather sharply from their Roman brethren, as in the matter of the taking of the cup by the people, and elsewhere.

Yet it is only fair to remember that this much answer was made to the versions which were preparing the way for the greatest version of them all, and when the time came for the making of that version, and the helps were gathered together, the Douai was frankly placed among them. It is a peculiar irony of fate that while the purpose of Gregory Martin was to check the translation of the Bible by the Protestants,

the only effect of his work was to advance and improve that translation.

At last, as we shall see in our next study, the way was cleared for a free and open setting of the Bible into English. The way had been beset with struggle, marked with blood, lighted by martyr fires. Wiclif and Purvey, Tindale and Coverdale, the refugees at Geneva and the Bishops at London, all had trod that way. Kings had fought them or had favored them; it was all one; they had gone on. Loyal zest for their Book and loving zeal for the common people had held them to the path. Now it had become a highway open to all men. And right worthy were the feet which were soon treading it.

LECTURE II

THE MAKING OF THE KING JAMES VERSION; ITS CHARACTERISTICS

EARLY in January, 1604, men were making their way along the poor English highways, by coach and carrier, to the Hampton Court Palace of the new English king. They were coming from the cathedral towns, from the universities, from the larger cities. Many were Church dignitaries, many were scholars, some were Puritans, all were loyal Englishmen, and they were gathering in response to a call for a conference with the king, James I. They were divided in sentiment, these men, and those who hoped most from the conference were doomed to complete disappointment. Not one among them, not the King, had the slightest purpose that the conference should do what proved to be its only real service. Some of the men, grave and earnest, were coming to present their petitions to the King, others were coming to oppose their petitions; the King meant to deny

them and to harry the petitioners. And everything came out as it had been planned. Yet the largest service of the conference, the only real service, was in no one's mind, for it was at Hampton Court, on the last day of the conference between James and the churchmen, January 18, 1604, that the first formal step was taken toward the making of the so-called Authorized Version of the English Bible. If there are such things as accidents, this great enterprise began in an accident. But the outcome of the accident, the volume that resulted, is "allowed by all competent authorities to be the first [that is, the chief] English classic," if our Professor Cook, of Yale, may speak; "is universally accepted as a literary masterpiece, as the noblest and most beautiful Book in the world, which has exercised an incalculable influence upon religion, upon manners, upon literature, and upon character," if the Balliol College scholar Hoare can be trusted; and has "made the English language," if Professor March is right. The purpose of this study is to show how that accident occurred, and what immediately came from it.

With the death of Elizabeth the Tudor line of sovereigns died out. The collateral Stuart

line, descending directly from Henry VII., naturally succeeded to the throne, and James VI. of Scotland made his royal progress to the English capital and became James I. of England. In him appears the first of that Stuart line during whose reign great changes were to occur. Every one in the line held strongly to the dogma of the divine right of kings, yet under that line the English people transferred sovereignty from the king to Parliament.[1] Fortunately for history, and for the progress of popular government, the Stuart line had no forceful figures in it. Macaulay thinks it would have been fatal to English liberty if they had been able kings. It was easier to take so dangerous a weapon as the divine right of kings from weak hands than from strong ones. So it was that though James came out of Scotland to assert his divine and arbitrary right as sovereign, by the time Queen Anne died, closing the Stuart line and giving way to the Hanoverian, the real sovereignty had passed into the hands of Parliament.

But the royal traveler, coming from Edinburgh to London, is interesting on his own account—interesting at this distance. He is thirty-seven years old, and ought to be in the

[1] Trevelyan, *England Under the Stuarts.*

beginning of his prime. He is a little over middle height; loves a good horse, though he is an ungainly rider, and has fallen off his horse three or four times during his royal progress; is a heavy drinker of the liquors of the period, with horribly coarse, even gross manners. Macaulay is very severe with him. He says that "his cowardice, his childishness, his pedantry, his ungainly person and manners, his provincial accent, made him an object of derision. Even in his virtues and accomplishments there was something eminently unkingly."[1] It seemed too bad that "royalty should be exhibited to the world stammering, slobbering, shedding unmanly tears, trembling at the drawn sword, and talking in the style alternately of a buffoon and of a pedagogue." That is truly not an attractive picture. But there is something on the other side. John Richard Green puts both sides: "His big head, his slobbering tongue, his quilted clothes, his rickety legs stood out in as grotesque a contrast with all that men recalled of Henry and Elizabeth as his gabble and rhodomontade, his want of personal dignity, his buffoonery, his coarseness of speech, his pedantry, his contemptible cowardice. Under this ridiculous exterior, however, lay a man of much

[1] *History of England,* chap. i.

natural ability, a ripe scholar with a considerable fund of shrewdness, of mother wit and ready repartee."[1]

Some good traits he must have had. He did win some men to him. As some one has said, "You could love him; you could despise him; you could not hate him." He could say some witty and striking things. For example, when he was urging the formal union of Scotland and England, and it was opposed, he said: "But I am the husband, and the whole island is my wife. I hope no one will be so unreasonable as to suppose that I, that am a Christian king under the Gospel, should be a polygamist and husband to two wives."[2] After the conference of which we have been speaking, he wrote to a friend in Scotland: "I have had a revel with the Puritans and have peppered them soundly." As indeed he had. Then, in some sense at least, "James was a born theologian." He had studied the Bible in some form from childhood; one of the first things we hear of his doing is the writing of a paraphrase on the book of the Revelation. In his talk he made easy and free use of Scripture quotations. To be sure, his knowledge, on which he prided himself unconscionably, was

[1] *Short History of the English People,* chap. viii, sec. ii.
[2] Trevelyan, *England Under the Stuarts,* p. 107.

shallow and pedantic. Henry IV. of France, one of his contemporaries, said that he was "the wisest fool in Christendom."

Now, it was this man who was making his royal progress from Edinburgh to London in March, 1603, nearly a year before the gathering of men which we were observing at the opening of this study. Many things happened on the journey besides his falling off his horse several times; but one of the most significant was the halting of the progress to receive what was called the Miliary Petition, whose name implies that it was signed by a thousand men—actually somewhat less than that number—mostly ministers of the Church. The Petition made no mention of any Bible version, yet it was the beginning of the events which led to it. Back of it was the Puritan influence. It asked for reforms in the English Church, for the correction of abuses which had grown under Elizabeth's increasing favor of ritual and ceremony. It asked for a better-trained ministry, for better discipline in the Church, for the omission of so many detailed requirements of rites and ceremonies, and for that perennially desired reform, shorter church services!

Very naturally the new King replied that he would take it up later, and promised to call a

conference to consider it. And this he did. The conference met at Hampton Court in January, 1604, and it was for this that the men were coming from many parts of England. The gathering was held on the 14th, 16th, and 18th of the month. Its sole purpose was to consider that Miliary Petition; but the King called to it not only those who had signed the Petition, but those who had opposed it. He had no notion of granting any favor to it, and from the first he gave the Puritans rough treatment. He told them he would have none of their nonconformity, he would "make them conform or harry them out of the land." Some one suggested that since this was a Church matter there be called a Synod, or some general gathering fitted to discuss and determine such things, rather than leave it to a few Church dignitaries. For the purposes of the petitioners it was a most unfortunate expression. James had just come from Scotland, where the Presbyterians were with their Synod, and where Calvinism was in full swing. He was much in favor of some elements of Calvinism; but he could not see how all the elements held together. Predestination, for example, which offends so many people to-day, was a precious doctrine to King James, and he insisted that his subjects ought to see how clearly

God had predestined him to rule over them! But he could not tolerate the necessary logical inference of Calvinism that all men must be equal before God, and so men can make and unmake kings as they need to do so, the matter of king or subject being purely an incidental one. He remembered the time when Andrew Melville, one of the Scotch ministers, had plucked him by his royal sleeve and called him "God's silly vassal" right to his face. So, when some one said "Synod" it brought the King up standing. He burst out: "If that is what you mean, if you want what the Scotch mean by their Synod and their Presbytery, then I tell you at once that I will have none of it. Presbytery agrees with monarchy very much as God agrees with the devil. If you have no bishop, you will soon have no king." He was perfectly right, with reference to the kind of king he meant. These things were to be settled, he meant, by authority, and not by conference. That is the point to which Gardiner refers when he says that "in two minutes James sealed his own fate and that of England forever."[1]

After that there was only a losing fight for the petitioners. They had touched a sore spot

[1] *History of England, 1603–42.*

in James's history. But it was when they touched that sore spot again that they started the movement for a new version of the Bible. It was on the second day of the conference, January 16th, that Dr. Reynolds, president of Corpus Christi College, Oxford, who represented the moderate Puritan position, and, like many moderate men, was rather suspected by both extreme wings, instanced as one of the hardships of the Puritans that they were compelled to use the prayer-book of the time, and that it contained many mistranslations of Scripture, some of which he quoted. Now, it so happens that the errors to which he referred occur in the Bishops' and the Great Bible, which were the two authorized versions of the time, but are all corrected in the Genevan version. We do not know what point he was trying to make, whether he was urging that the Genevan version should supplant these others, or whether he was calling for a new translation. Indeed, we are not sure that he even mentioned the Genevan version. But James spoke up to say that he had never yet seen a Bible well translated into English; but the worst of all he thought the Genevan to be. He spoke as though he had just had a copy given him by an English lady, and had already noted what he called its

errors. That was at the very least a royal evasion, for if there was any Book he did know it was the Genevan version. He had been fairly raised on it; he had lived in the country where it was commonly used. It had been preached at him many and many a time. Indeed, he had used it as the text for that paraphrase of the Revelation of which we spoke a moment ago. And he knew its notes—well he knew them—knew that they were from republican Geneva, and that kingly pretensions had short shrift with them. James told the conference that these notes were "very partial, untrue, seditious, savoring too much of traitorous and dangerous conceits," supporting his opinion by two instances which seemed disrespectful to royalty. One of these instances was the note on Exodus i:17, where the Egyptian midwives are said to have disobeyed the king in the matter of destroying the children. The note says: "Their disobedience to the king was lawful, though their dissembling was not." James quoted that, and said: "It is false; to disobey the king is not lawful, and traitorous conceits should not go forth among the people."

Some of the High Church party objected that there were translations enough already; but it struck James's fancy to set them all aside by

another version, which he at once said he would order. It was to be made by the most learned of both universities, then to be revised by the bishops and other Church dignitaries, then presented to the Privy Council, and finally to be passed upon by himself. There is the echo of some sharp Scotch experiences in his declaration that there were to be no marginal notes in that new version.

When they looked back on the conference, the Puritans felt that they had lost everything, and the High Church people that they had gained everything. One of the bishops, in a very servile way, and on his knee, gave thanks to God for having given the country such a king, whose like had never been seen since Christ was on earth. Certainly hard times were ahead for the Puritans. The King harried them according to his word. Within sixteen years some of them landed at Plymouth Rock, and things began to happen on this side. That settlement at Plymouth was the outcome of the threat the King had made at the Hampton Court conference.

But looking back one can see that the conference was worth while for the beginning of the movement for the new version. The King was true to his word in this line also, and before the year was out had appointed the fifty-four

best Bible scholars of the realm to make the new version. They were to sit in six companies of nine each, two at Oxford, two at Cambridge, and two at Westminster. The names of only forty-seven of them have come down to us, and it is not known whether the other seven were ever appointed, or in what way their names have been lost. It must be said for the King that the only principle of selection was scholarship, and when those six groups of men met they were men of the very first rank, with no peers outside their own numbers—with one exception, and that exception is of some passing interest. Hugh Broughton was probably the foremost Hebrew scholar of England, perhaps of the world, at the time, and apparently he was not appointed on the committee. Chiefly, it seems to have been because he was a man of ungovernable temper and utterly unfitted to work with others. Failure to appoint him, however, bit and rankled, and the only keen and sharp criticism that was passed on the version in its own day was by Hugh Broughton. He sent word to the King, after it was completed, that as for himself he would rather be rent to pieces by wild horses than have had any part in the urging of such a wretched version of the Bible on the poor people. That was so manifestly pique, however,

that it is only to be regretted that the translation did not have the benefit of his great Hebrew knowledge. John Selden, at his prime in that day, voiced the feeling of most scholars of the times, that the new translation was the best in the world and best gave the sense of the original.

We do not know much of the personnel of the company. Their names would mean very little to us at this distance. All were clergymen except one. There were bishops, college principals, university fellows, and rectors. Dr. Reynolds, who suggested it in the first place, was a member, though he did not live to see the work finished. This Dr. Reynolds, by the way, was party to a most curious episode. He had been an ardent Roman Catholic, and he had a brother who was an equally ardent Protestant. They argued with each other so earnestly that each convinced the other; the Roman Catholic became a Protestant, and the Protestant became a Roman Catholic! Dr. Lancelot Andrewes, chairman of one of the two companies that met at Westminster, was probably the most learned man in England. They said of him that if he had been present at the tower of Babel he could have interpreted for all the tongues present. The only trouble was that the world lacked

learning enough to know how learned he was. His company had the first part of the Old Testament, and the simple dignity of the style they used shows how scholarship and simplicity go easily together. Most people would consider that the least satisfactory part of the work is the second section, running from I Chronicles to Ecclesiastes. A convert from another faith, who learned to read the Bible in English, once expressed to a friend of my own his feeling that except for the Psalms and parts of Job, there seemed to be here a distinct letting-down of the dignity of the translation. There is good excuse for this, if it is so, for two leading members of the company who had that section in charge, both eminent Cambridge scholars, died very early in the work, and their places were not filled. The third company, sitting at Oxford, were peculiarly strong, and had for their portion the hardest part of the Old Testament—all the prophetical writings. But they did their part with finest skill. The fourth company, sitting at Cambridge, had the Apocrypha, the books which lie between the Old and the New Testaments for the most part, or else are supplemental to certain Old Testament books. Their work was rather hastily and certainly poorly done, and has been dropped out of most editions. The

fifth company, sitting at Oxford, with great Greek scholars on it, took the Gospels, the Acts, and the Revelation. This company had in it the one layman, Sir Henry Savile, then the greatest Greek scholar in England. It is the same Sir Henry Savile who heard, on his death-bed in 1621, that James had with his own hands torn from the Journal of Parliament the pages which bore the protest in favor of free speech in Parliament. Hearing it, the faithful scholar prayed to die, saying: "I am ready to depart, the rather that having lived in good times I foresee worse." The sixth company met at Westminster and translated the New Testament epistles.

It was the original plan that when one company had finished its part, the result should go to each of the other companies, coming back with their suggestions to the original workers to be recast by them. The whole was then to be reviewed by a smaller committee of scholars to give it uniformity and to see it through the press. The records are not extant that tell whether this was done in full detail, though we may presume that each section of the Scripture had the benefit of the scholarship of the entire company.

We know a good deal of the method of their

work. We shall understand it better by recalling what material they had at hand. They were enabled to use the result of all the work that had been done before them. They were instructed to follow the Bishops' Bible wherever they could do so fairly; but they were given power to use the versions already named from Wiclif down, as well as those fragmentary versions which were numerous, and of which no mention has been made. They ransacked all English forms for felicitous words and happy phrases. It is one of the interesting incidents that this same Hugh Broughton, who was left off the committee and took it so hard, yet without his will contributed some important matter to the translation, because he had on his own authority made translations of certain parts of the Scripture. Several of our capital phrases in the King James version are from him. There was no effort to break out new paths. Preference was always given to a familiar phrase rather than to a new one, unless accuracy required it. First, then, they had the benefit of all the work that had been done before in the same line, and gladly used it.

In addition, they had all other versions made in the tongues of the time. Chiefly there was Luther's German Bible, already become for the

German tongue what their version was destined to be for the English tongue. There were parts of the Bible available in Spanish, French, and Dutch. They were kept at hand constantly for any light they might cast on difficult passages.

For the Old Testament there were very few Hebrew texts. There had been little critical work yet done on them, and for the most part there were only different editions running back over the centuries. We have little more than that now, and there is almost no new material on the Old Testament since the days of the King James translators. There was, of course, the Septuagint, the Greek translation from the Hebrew made before Christ, with the guidance it could give in doubtful places on the probable original. And finally there was the Vulgate, made into Latin out of the Greek and Hebrew. This was all the Old Testament material they had, or that any one could have in view of the antiquated original sources.

The New Testament material was more abundant, though not nearly so abundant as to-day. There were few manuscripts of the early days to which they could refer; but there were the two great critical versions of the New Testament in Greek, that by Erasmus and the

Complutensian, which had made use of the best manuscripts known. Then, finally again, there was the Vulgate.

We must stop a moment to see what was the value of the Vulgate in this work. It is impossible to reckon the number of the early New Testament manuscripts that have been lost. In the earlier day the Scriptures were transmitted from church to church, and from age to age, by manuscripts. Many of them were made as direct copies of other manuscripts; but many were made by scribes to whom the manuscripts were read as they wrote, so that there are many, though ordinarily comparatively slight, variations among the manuscripts which we now know. More manuscripts are coming to light constantly, manuscripts once well known and then lost. Many of them, perhaps many earlier than we now have, must have been familiar to Jerome four hundred years after Christ. When, therefore, there is a plain difference between the Vulgate and our early Greek manuscripts, the Vulgate may be wrong because it is only a translation; but it may be right because it is a translation of earlier manuscripts than some of ours. It is steadily losing its value at that point, for Greek manuscripts are all the time coming to light which run farther back. But we must not

minimize the value of the Vulgate for our King James translation.

With all this material the scholars of the early seventeenth century set to work. Each man in the group made the translation that seemed best to him, and together they analyzed the results and finally agreed on the best. They hunted the other versions to see if it had been better done elsewhere. The shade of Tindale was over it all. The Genevan version was most influential. The Douai had its share, and the Bishops' was the general standard, altered only when accuracy required it. On all hard passages they called to their aid the appropriate departments of both universities. All scholars everywhere were asked to send in any contributions, to correct or criticize as they would. Public announcement of the work was made, and all possible help was besought and gladly accepted.

Very faithfully these greatest scholars of their time wrought. No one worked for money, and no one worked for pay, but each for the joy of the working. Three years they spent on the original work, three years on careful revision and on the marginal references by which Scripture was made to throw light on Scripture. Then in six months a committee reviewed it all, put it through the press, and at last, in 1611,

with the imprint of Robert Barker, Printer to the King's Most Excellent Majesty, the King James version appeared. The name Authorized Version is not a happy one, for so far as the records go it was never authorized either by the King or the bishop; and, even if it were, the authority does not extend beyond the English Church, which is a very small fraction of those who use it. On the title-page of the original version, as on so many since, is the familiar line, "Appointed to be Read in Churches," but who made the appointment history does not say.

The version did not at once supersede the Genevan and the Bishops'; but it was so incomparably better than either that gradually they disappeared, and by sheer excellence it took the field, and it holds the field to-day in spite of the numerous supposedly improved versions that have appeared under private auspices. It holds the field, also, in spite of the excellent revised version of 1881 made by authority, and the more excellent version issued in 1901 by the American Revision Committee, to-day undoubtedly the best version in existence, considered simply as a reproduction of the sense of the original. And for reasons that may later appear, the King James version bids fair to hold the field for many years to come.

When we turn from the history of its making to the work itself, there is much to say. We may well narrow our thought for the remainder of the study to its traits as a *version* of the Bible.

I. Name this first, that it is an honest version. That is, it has no argumentative purpose. It is not, as the scholars say, apologetic. It is simply an out-and-out version of the Scripture, as honestly as they could reproduce it. There were Puritans on the committee; there were extreme High Churchmen; there were men of all grades between. But there is nowhere any evidence that any one was set on making the Bible prove his point. There were strong anti-papal believers among them; but they made free use of the Douai version, and, of course, of the Vulgate. They knew the feeling that Hugh Broughton had toward them; but they made generous use of all that was good in his work. They were working under a royal warrant, and their dedication to King James, with its absurd and fulsome flattery, shows what they were capable of when they thought of the King. But there is no twist of a text to make it serve the purposes of royalty. They might be servile when they thought of King James; but there was not a touch of servility in them

when they thought of the Scripture itself. They were under instruction not to abandon the use of ecclesiastical terms. For instance, they were not to put "congregation" in place of "church," as some Puritans wanted to do. Some thought that was meant to insure a High Church version; but the translators did not understand it so for a moment. They understood it only to safeguard them against making a partisan version on either side, and to help them to make a version which the people could read understandingly at once. It was not to be a Puritan Book nor a High Church Book. It was to be an honest version of the Bible, no matter whose side it sustained.

Now, if any one thinks that is easy, or only a matter of course, he plainly shows that he has never been a theologian or a scholar in a contested field. Ask any lawyer whether it is easy to handle his authorities with entire impartiality, whether it is a matter of course that he will let them say just what they meant to say when his case is involved. Of course, he will seek to do it as an honest lawyer, but equally, of course, he will have to keep close watch on himself or he will fail in doing it. Ask any historian whether it is easy to handle the original documents in a field in which he has firm and announced opin-

ions, and to let those documents speak exactly what they mean to say, whether they support him or not. The greater historians will always do it, but they will sometimes do it with a bit of a wrench.

Even a scholar is human, and these men sitting in their six companies would all have to meet this Book afterward, would have their opinions tried by it. There must have been times when some of them would be inclined to salt the mine a little, to see that it would yield what they would want it to yield later. So far as these men were able to do it, they made it say in English just what it said in Hebrew and Greek. They showed no inclination to use it as a weapon in their personal warfare.

One line of that honest effort is worth observing more closely. When points were open to fair discussion, and scholarship had not settled them, they were careful not to let their version take sides when it could be avoided. On some mooted words they did not try translation, but transliteration instead. That is, they brought the Greek or Hebrew word over into English, letter by letter. Suppose scholars differed as to the exact meaning in English of a word in the Greek. Some said it has this meaning, and some that it has that. Now, if the version committed

itself to one of those meanings, it became an argument at once against the other and helped to settle a question on which scholarship was not yet agreed. They could avoid making a partisan Book by the simple device of bringing the word which was disputed over into the new translation. That left the discussion just where it was before, but it saved the work from being partisan. The method of transliteration did not always work to advantage, as we shall see, but it was intended throughout to save the Book from taking sides on any question where honest men might differ as to the meaning of words.

They did that with all proper names, and that was notable in the Old Testament, because most Old Testament proper names can be translated. They all mean something in themselves. Adam is the Hebrew word for man; Abraham means Father of a Great Multitude; David is the Hebrew word for Beloved; Malachi means My Messenger. Yet as proper names they do not mean any of those things. It is impossible to translate a proper name into another tongue without absurdity. It must be transliterated. Yet there is constant fascination for translators in the work of translating these proper names, trying to make them seem more vivid. It is quite likely, though it is disputed, that proper

names do all go back to simple meanings. But by the time they become proper names they no longer have those meanings. The only proper treatment of them is by transliteration.

The King James translators follow that same practice of transliteration rather than translation with another word which is full of controversial possibility. I mean the word "baptism." There was dispute then as now about the method of that ordinance in early Christian history. There were many who held that the classical meaning which involved immersion had been taken over bodily into the Christian faith, and that all baptism was by immersion. There were others who held that while that might be the classical meaning of the word, yet in early Christian custom baptism was not by immersion, but might be by sprinkling or pouring, and who insisted that no pressure on the mode was wise or necessary. That dispute continues to this day. Early versions of the Bible already figured in the discussion, and for a while there was question whether this King James version should take sides in that controversy, about which men equally loyal to truth and early Christian history could honestly differ. The translators avoided taking sides by bringing the Greek word which was under discussion over into

English, letter by letter. Our word "baptism" is not an English word nor a Saxon word; it is a purely Greek word. The controversy has been brought over into the English language; but the King James version avoided becoming a controversial book. A number of years ago the convictions of some were so strong that another version of the Bible was made, in which the word baptism was carefully replaced by what was believed to be the English translation, "immersion," but the version never had wide influence.

In this connection it is well to notice the effort of the King James translators at a fair statement of the divine name. It will be remembered that it appears in the Old Testament ordinarily as "LORD," printed in small capitals. A very interesting bit of verbal history lies back of that word. The word which represents the divine name in Hebrew consists of four consonants, J or Y, H, V, and H. There are no vowels; indeed, there were no vowels in the early Hebrew at all. Those that we now have were added not far from the time of Christ. No one knows the original pronunciation of that sacred name consisting of four letters. At a very early day it had become too sacred to pronounce, so that when men came to it in reading

or in speech, they simply used another word which is, translated into English, Lord, a word of high dignity. When the time came that vowels were to be added to the consonants, the vowels of this other word Lord were placed under the consonants of the sacred name, so that in the word Jehovah, where the J H V H occur, there are the consonants of one word whose vowels are unknown and the vowels of another word whose consonants are not used.

Illustrate it by imagining that in American literature the name Lincoln gathered to itself such sacredness that it was never pronounced and only its consonants were ever printed. Suppose that whenever readers came to it they simply said Washington, thinking Lincoln all the while. Then think of the displacement of the vowels of Lincoln by the vowels of Washington. You have a word that looks like Lancilon or Lanicoln; but a reader would never pronounce so strange a word. He would always say Washington, yet he would always think the other meaning. And while he would retain the meaning in some degree, he would soon forget the original word, retaining only his awe of it. Which is just what happened with the divine name. The Hebrews knew it was not Lord, yet they always said Lord when they came to the

four letters that stood for the sacred word. The word Jehovah, made up of the consonants of an unknown word and the vowels of a familiar word, is in itself meaningless. Scholarship is not yet sure what was the original meaning of the sacred name with its four consonants.

These translators had to face that problem. It was a peculiar problem at that time. How should they put into English the august name of God when they did not know what the true vowels were? There was dispute among scholars. They did not take sides as our later American Revision has done, some of us think quite unwisely. They chose to retain the Hebrew usage, and print the divine name in unmistakable type so that its personal meaning could not be mistaken.

On the other hand, disputes since their day have shown how they translated when transliteration would have been wiser. Illustrate with one instance. There is a Hebrew word, Sheol, with a Greek word, Hades, which corresponds to it. Usage had adopted the Anglo-Saxon word Hell as the equivalent of both of these words, so they translated Sheol and Hades with the English word Hell. The only question that had been raised was by that Hugh Broughton of whom we were speaking a moment ago, and it

had not seemed a serious one. Certainly the three terms have much in common, and there are places where both the original words seemed to be virtually equivalent to the Anglo-Saxon Hell, but they are not the same. The Revised Version of our own time returned to the original, and instead of translating those words whose meaning can be debated, it transliterated them and brought the Hebrew word Sheol and the Greek word Hades over into English. That, of course, gave a chance for paragraphers to say that the Revised Version had read Hell out of the Scriptures. All that happened was that cognizance was taken of a dispute which would have guided the King James translators if it had existed in their time, and we should not have become familiar with the Anglo-Saxon word Hell as the translation of those disputed Hebrew and Greek words.

We need not seek more instances. These are enough to illustrate the saying that here is an honest version, the fruit of the best scholarship of the times, without prejudice.

II. A second trait of the work as a version is its remarkable accuracy. It is surprising that with all the new light coming from early documents, with all the new discoveries that have been made, the latest revision needed to make

so few changes, and those for the most part minor ones. There are, to be sure, some important changes, as we shall see later; the wonder is that there are not many more. The King James version had, to be sure, the benefit of all the earlier controversy. The whole ground had been really fought over in the centuries before, and most of the questions had been discussed. They frankly made use of all the earlier controversy. They say in their preface: "Truly, good Christian reader, we never thought from the beginning that we should need to make a new translation, nor yet to make a bad one a good one, but to make a good one better. That hath been our endeavor, that our work." Also, they had the advantage of deliberation. This was the first version that had been made which had such sanction that they could take their time, and in which they had no reason to fear that the results would endanger them. They say in their preface that they had not run over their work with that "posting haste" that had marked the Septuagint, if the saying was true that they did it all in seventy-two days; nor were they "barred and hindered from going over it again," as Jerome himself said he had been, since as soon as he wrote any part "it was snatched away from him and published"; nor

were they "working in a new field," as Origen was when he wrote his first commentary on the Bible. Both these things—their taking advantage of earlier controversies which had cleared many differences, and their deliberation—were supplemented by a third which gave great accuracy to the version. That was their adoption of the principle of all early translators, perhaps worded best by Purvey, who completed the Wiclif version: "The best translation is to translate after the sentence, and not only after the words, so that the sentence be as open in English as in Latin." That makes for accuracy. It is quite impossible to put any language over, word for word, into another without great inaccuracy. But when the translators sought to take the sentence of the Hebrew or the Greek and put it into an exactly equivalent English sentence, they had larger play for their language and they had a fairer field for accuracy. These were the three great facts which made the remarkable accuracy possible, and it may be interesting to note three corresponding results which show the effort they made to be absolutely accurate and fair in their translation.

The first of those results is visible in the italicized words which they used. In the King James version words in italics are a frank ac-

knowledgment that the Greek or the Hebrew cannot be put into English literally. These are English words which are put in because it seems impossible to express the meaning originally intended without certain additions which the reader must take into account in his understanding of the version. We need not think far to see how necessary that was. The arrangement of words in Greek, for example, is different from that in English. The Greek of the first verse of the Gospel of John reads that "God was the Word," but the English makes its sentences in a reversed form, and it really means, "the Word was God." So the Greek uses particles where the English does not. Often it would say "the God" where we would say simply "God." Those particles are ordinarily wisely omitted. So the Greek does not use verbs at some points where it is quite essential that the English shall use them. But it is only fair that in reading a version of the Scripture we should know what words have been put in by translators in their effort to make the version clear to us; and the italicized words of the King James version are a frank effort to be accurate and yet fair.

The second result which shows their effort at accuracy is in the marginal readings. Most of

these are optional readings, and are preceded by the word "or," which indicates that one may read what is in the text, or substitute for it what is in the margin with equal fairness to the original. But sometimes, instead of that familiar "or," occur letters which indicate that the Hebrew or the Greek literally means something else than what is given in the English text, and what it literally means is given in the margin. The translators thereby say to the reader that if he can take that literal meaning and put it into the text so that it is intelligible to him, here is his chance. As for them, they think that the whole context or meaning of the sentence rather involves the use of the phrase which they put into the text. But the marginal references are of great interest to most of us as showing how these men were frank to say that there were some things they could not settle. They were rather blamed for it, chiefly by those who had committed themselves to the Douai version, which has no marginal readings, on the ground that the translation ought to be as authoritative as the original. The King James translators repudiate that theory and frankly say that the reason they put these words in the margin was because they were not sure what was the best reading. In the margin

of the epistle to the Romans there are eighty-four such marginal readings, and the proportion will hold throughout most of the version. They were only trying to be accurate and to give every one a chance to make up his own mind where there was fair reason to question their results.

The third thing which shows their effort at accuracy is their explicit avoidance of uniformity in translating the same word. They tried to put the meaning into English terms. So, as they say, the one word might become either "journeying" or "traveling"; one word might be "thinking" or "supposing," "joy" or "gladness," "eternal" or "everlasting." One of the reasons they give for this is quaint enough to quote. They said they did not think it right to honor some words by giving them a place forever in the Bible, while they virtually said to other equally good words: Get ye hence and be banished forever. They quote a "certaine great philosopher" who said that those logs were happy which became images and were worshiped, while other logs as good as they were laid behind the fire to be burned. So they sought to use as many English words, familiar in speech and commonly understood, as they might, lest they should impoverish the language, and so lose out of use good words. There is no

doubt that in this effort both to save the language, and to represent accurately the meaning of the original, they sometimes overdid that avoidance of uniformity. There were times when it would have been well if the words had been more consistently translated. For example, in the epistle of James ii: 2, 3, you have goodly "apparel," vile "raiment," and gay "clothing," all translating one Greek word. Our revised versions have sought to correct such inconsistencies. But it was all done in the interest of an accuracy that should yet not be a slavish uniformity.

This will be enough to illustrate what was meant in speaking of the effort of the translators to achieve accuracy in their version.

III. The third marked trait of the work as a version of the Scripture is its striking blending of dignity and popularity in its language. At any period of a living language, there are three levels of speech. There is an upper level used by the clearest thinkers and most careful writers, always correct according to the laws of the language, generally somewhat remote from common life—the habitual speech of the more intellectual. There is also the lower level used by the least intellectual, frequently incorrect according to the laws of the language, rough, containing

what we now call "slang," the talk of a knot of men on the street corner waiting for a new bulletin of a ball game, cheap in words, impoverished in synonyms, using one word to express any number of ideas, as slang always does. Those two levels are really farther apart than we are apt to realize. A book or an article on the upper level will be uninteresting and unintelligible to the people on the lower level. And a book in the language of the lower level is offensive and disgusting to those of the upper level. That is not because the ideas are so remote, but because the characteristic expressions are almost unfamiliar to the people of the different levels. The more thoughtful people read the abler journals of the day; they read the editorials or the more extended articles; they read also the great literature. If they take up the sporting page of a newspaper to read the account of a ball game written in the style of the lower level of thought, where words are misused in disregard of the laws of the language, and where one word is made to do duty for a great many ideas, they do it solely for amusement. They could never think of finding their mental stimulus in that sort of thing. On the other hand, there are people who find in that kind of reading their real interest. If they should take up a thought-

ful editorial or a book of essays, they would not know what the words mean in the connection in which they are used. They speak a good deal about the vividness of this lower-level language, about its popularity; they speak with a sneer about the stiffness and dignity of that upper level.

These are, however, only the two extremes, for there is always a middle level where move words common to both, where are avoided the words peculiar to each. It is the language that most people speak. It is the language of the street, and also of the study, of the parlor, and of the shop. But it has little that is peculiar to either of those other levels, or to any one place where a man may live his life and do his talking. If we illustrate from other literature, we can say that Macaulay's essays move on the upper level, and that much of the so-called popular literature of our day moves on the lower level, while Dickens moves on the middle level, which means that men whose habitual language is that of the upper and the lower levels can both enter into the spirit of his writing.

Now, originally the Bible moved on that middle level. It was a colloquial book. The languages in which it first appeared were not in the classic forms. They are the languages of the

streets where they were written. The Hebrew is almost our only example of the tongue at its period, but it is not a literary language in any case. The Greek of the New Testament is not the Eolic, the language of the lyrics of Sappho; nor the Doric, the language of war-songs or the chorus in the drama; nor the Ionic, the dialect of epic poetry; but the Attic Greek, and a corrupted form of that, a form corrupted by use in the streets and in the markets.

That was the original language of the Bible, a colloquial language. But that fact does not determine the translation. Whether it shall be put into the English language on the upper level or on the lower level is not so readily determined. Efforts have been made to put it into the language of each level. We have a so-called elegant translation, and we have the Bible cast into the speech of the common day. The King James version is on the middle level. It is a striking blending of the dignity of the upper level and the popularity of the lower level.

There is tremendous significance in the fact that these men were making a version which should be for all people, making it out in the open day with the king and all the people behind them. It was the first independent version which had been made under such favorable cir-

cumstances. Most of the versions had been made in private by men who were imperiling themselves in their work. They did not expect the Book to pass into common use; they knew that the men who received the result of their work would have to be those who were earnest enough to go into secret places for their reading. But here was a changed condition. These men were making a version by royal authority, a version awaited with eager interest by the people in general. The result is that it is a people's Book. Its phrases are those of common life, those that had lived up to that time. It is not in the peculiar language of the times. If you want to know the language of their own times, read these translators' servile, unhistorical dedication to the king, or their far nobler preface to the reader. That is the language peculiar to their own day. But the language of the Bible itself is that form which had lived its way into common use. One hundred years after Wiclif it yet speaks his language in large part, for that part had really lived. In the *Bibliotheca Pastorum* Ruskin makes comment on Sir Philip Sidney and his metrical version of the Psalms in these words: "Sir Philip Sidney will use any cow-boy or tinker words if they only help him to say precisely in English what David said in

Hebrew; impressed the while himself so vividly of the majesty of the thought itself that no tinker's language can lower it or vulgarize it in his mind." The King James translators were most eager to say what the original said, and to say it so that the common man could well understand it, and yet so that it should not be vulgarized or cheapened by adoption of cheap words.

In his History Hallam passes some rather sharp strictures on the English of the King James version, remarking that it abounds in uncouth phrases and in words whose meaning is not familiar, and that whatever is to be said it is, at any rate, not in the English of the time of King James. And that latter saying is true, though it must be remembered that Hallam wrote in the period when no English was recognized by literary people except that of the upper level, when they did not know that these so-called uncouth phrases were to return to common use. To-day it would be absurd to say that the Bible is full of uncouth phrases. Professor Cook has said that "the movement of English diction, which in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was on the whole away from the Bible, now returns with ever-accelerating speed toward it." If the phrases went out,

they came back. But it is true that the English of the King James version is not that of the time of James I., only because it is the English of the history of the language. It has not immortalized for us the tongue of its times, because it has taken that tongue from its beginning and determined its form. It carefully avoided words that were counted coarse. On the other hand, it did not commit itself to words which were simply refinements of verbal construction. That, I say, is a general fact.

It can be illustrated in one or two ways. For instance, a word which has become common to us is the neuter possessive pronoun "its." That word does not occur in the edition of 1611, and appears first in an edition in the printing of 1660. In place of it, in the edition of 1611, the more dignified personal pronoun "his" or "her" is always used, and it continues for the most part in our familiar version. In this verse you notice it: "Look not upon the wine when it is red; when it giveth *his* color aright in the cup." In the Levitical law especially, where reference is made to sacrifices, to the articles of the furniture of the tabernacle, or other neuter objects, the masculine pronoun is almost invariably used. In the original it was invariably used. You see the other form in the familiar verse

about charity, that it "doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not *her* own, is not easily provoked." Now, there is evidence that the neuter possessive pronoun was just coming into use. Shakespeare uses it ten times in his works, but ten times only, and a number of writers do not use it at all. It was, to be sure, a word beginning to be heard on the street, and for the most part on the lower level. The King James translators never used it. The dignified word was that masculine or feminine pronoun, and they always use it in place of the neuter.

On the other hand, there was a word which was coming into use on the upper level which has become common property to us now. It is the word "anxiety." It is not certain just when it came into use. I believe Shakespeare does not use it; and it occurs very little in the literature of the times. Probably it was known to these translators. When they came, however, to translating a word which now we translate by "anxious" or "anxiety" they did not use that word. It was not familiar. They used instead the word which represented the idea for the people of the middle level; they used the word "thought." So they said, "Take no thought for the morrow," where we would say, "Be not anxious for the morrow." There is a contemporary docu-

ment which illustrates how that word "thought" was commonly used, in which we read: "In five hundred years only two queens died in child birth, Queen Catherine Parr having died rather of thought." That was written about the time of the King James version, and "thought" evidently means worry or anxiety. Neither of those words, the neuter possessive pronoun or the new word "anxious," got into the King James version. One was coming into proper use from the lower level, and one was coming into proper use from the upper level. They had not yet so arrived that they could be used.

One result of this care to preserve dignity and also popularity appears in the fact that so few words of the English version have become obsolete. Words disappear upward out of the upper level or downward out of the lower level, but it takes a long time for a word to get out of a language once it is in confirmed use on the middle level. Of course, the version itself has tended to keep words familiar; but no book, no matter how widely used, can prevent some words from passing off the stage or from changing their meaning so noticeably that they are virtually different words. Yet even in those words which do not become common there is very little tendency to obsolescence in the King James version.

More words of Shakespeare have become obsolete or have changed their meanings than in the King James version.

There is one interesting illustration to which attention has been called by Dr. Davidson, which is interesting. In the ninth chapter of the Judges, where we are told about Abimelech, the fifty-third verse reads that a woman cast a stone down from the wall and "all to break his skull." That is confessedly rather obscure. Our ordinary understanding of it would be that she did that for no other purpose than just to break the skull of Abimelech. As a matter of fact, that expression is a printer's bungling way of giving a word which has become obsolete in the original form. When the King James translators wrote that, they used the word "alto," which is evidently the beginning of "altogether," or wholly or utterly, and what they meant was that she threw the stone and utterly broke his skull. But that abbreviated form of the word passed out of use, and when later printers—not much later—came to it they did not know what it meant and divided it as it stands in our present text. It is one of the few words that have become obsolete. But so few are there of them, that it was made a rule of the Revised Version not to admit to the new

version, where it could be avoided, any word not already found in the Authorized Version, and also not to omit from the Revised Version, except under pressure of necessity, any word which occurred there. It is largely this blending of dignity and popularity that has made the King James version so influential in English literature. It talks the language not of the upper level nor of the lower level, but of that middle level where all meet sometimes and where most men are all the while.

These are great traits to mark a book, any book, but especially a translation — that it is honest, that it is accurate, and that its language blends dignity and popularity so that it lowers the speech of none. They are all conspicuous traits of our familiar version of the Bible, and in them in part lies its power with the generations of these three centuries that have followed its appearance.

LECTURE III

THE KING JAMES VERSION AS ENGLISH LITERATURE

LET it be plainly said at the very first that when we speak of the literary phases of the Bible we are not discussing the book in its historic meaning. It was never meant as literature in our usual sense of the word. Nothing could have been further from the thought of the men who wrote it, whoever they were and whenever they wrote, than that they were making a world literature. They had the characteristics of men who do make great literature—they had clear vision and a great passion for truth; they loved their fellows mightily, and they were far more concerned to be understood than to speak. These are traits that go to make great writers. But it was never in their minds that they were making a world literature. The Bible is a book of religious significance from first to last. If it utterly broke down by the tests of literature, it might be as great a book

as it needs to be. It is a subordinate fact that by the tests of literature it proves also to be great. Prof. Gardiner, of Harvard, whose book called *The Bible as English Literature* makes other such works almost unnecessary, frankly bases his judgment on the result of critical study of the Bible, but he serves fair warning that he takes inspiration for granted, and thinks it "obvious that no literary criticism of the Bible could hope for success which was not reverent in tone. A critic who should approach it superciliously or arrogantly would miss all that has given the Book its power as literature and its lasting and universal appeal."[1] Farther over in his book he goes on to say that when we search for the causes of the feelings which made the marvelous style of the Bible a necessity, explanation can make but a short step, for "we are in a realm where the only ultimate explanation is the fact of inspiration; and that is only another way of saying that we are in the presence of forces above and beyond our present human understanding."[2]

However, we may fairly make distinction between the Bible as an original work and the Bible as a work of English literature. For the Bible as an original work is not so much a book

[1] Preface, p. vii. [2] Page 124.

as a series of books, the work of many men working separately over a period of at least fifteen hundred years, and these men unconscious for the most part of any purpose of agreement. This series of books is made one book in the original by the unity of its general purpose and the agreement of its parts. The Bible in English is, however, not a series of books, but properly one book, the work of six small groups of men working in conscious unity through a short period of years. And while there is variation in style, while there are inequalities in result, yet it stands as a single piece of English literature. It has a literary style of its own, even though it feels powerfully the Hebrew influence throughout. And while it would not be a condemnation of the Bible if it were not great literature in English or elsewhere, it is still part of its power that by literary standards alone it measures large.

It is so that men of letters have rated it since it came into existence. "It holds a place of pre-eminence in the republic of letters." When John Richard Green comes to deal with it, he says: "As a mere literary monument the English version of the Bible remains the noblest language of the English tongue, while its perpetual use made of it from the instant of its appearance

the standard of our language."[1] And in Macaulay's essay on Dryden, while he is deploring the deterioration of English style, he yet says that in the period when the English language was imperiled there appeared "the English Bible, a book which if everything else in our language should perish would alone suffice to show the extent of its beauty and power."

The mere fact that the English Bible contains a religion does not affect its standing as literature. Homer and Virgil are Greek and Roman classics, yet each of them contains a definite religion. You can build up the religious faith of the Greeks and Romans out of their great literature. So you can build up the religious faith of the Hebrews and the early Christians from the Old and New Testaments. "For fifteen centuries a Hebrew Book, the Bible, contained almost the whole literature and learning of a whole nation," while it was also the book of their religion.

As literature, however, apart from its religious connection, it is subject to any of the criteria of literature. In so far it is the fair subject of criticism. It must stand or fall when it enters the realm of literature by the standards of other books. Indeed, many questions regarding its

[1] *Short History of the English People*, Book vii, chap. i.

dates, the authorship of unassigned portions, the meaning of its disputed passages may be answered most fairly by literary tests. That is always liable to abuse; but literary tests are always liable to that. There have been enough blunders made in the knowledge of us all to require us to go carefully in such a matter. The Waverley Novels were published anonymously, and, while some suspected Scott at once, others were entirely clear that on the ground of literary style his authorship was entirely impossible! Let a magazine publish an anonymous serial, and readers everywhere are quick to recognize the writer from his literary style and his general ideas, but each group "recognizes" a different writer. Arguments based chiefly on style overlook the large personal equation in all writing. The same writer has more than one natural style. It is not until he becomes in a certain sense affected—grows proud of his peculiarities—that he settles down to one form. And it is quite impossible to assign a book to any narrow historical period on the ground of its style alone. But though large emphasis could be laid upon the literary merits of the Bible to the obscuring of its other more important merits, it is yet true that from the literary point of view the Bible stands as an English

classic, indeed, as the outstanding English classic. To acknowledge ignorance of it is to confess one's self ignorant of our greatest literary possession.

A moment ago it was said that as a piece of literature the Bible must accept the standards of other literary books. For all present purposes we can define great literature as worthy written expression of great ideas. If we may take the word "written" for granted, the rough definition becomes this: that great literature is the worthy expression of great ideas. Works which claim to be great in literature may fail of greatness in either half of that test. Petty, local, unimportant ideas may be well clothed, or great ideas may be unworthily expressed; in either case the literature is poor. It is not until great ideas are wedded to worthy expression that literature becomes great. Failure at one end or the other will explain the failure of most of the work that seeks to be accounted literature. The literary value of a book cannot be determined by its style alone. It is possible to say nothing gracefully, even with dignity, symmetry, rhythm; but it is not possible to make literature without ideas. Abiding literature demands large ideas worthily expressed. Now, of course, "large" and "small" are not words

that are usually applied to the measurement of ideas; but we can make them seem appropriate here. Let us mean that an idea is large or small according to its breadth of interest to the race and its length of interest to the race. If there is an idea which is of value to all the members of the human race to-day, and which does not lose its value as the generations come and go, that is the largest possible idea within human thought. Transient literature may do without those large ideas. A gifted young reporter may describe a dog fight or a presidential nominating convention in such terms as lift his article out of carelessness and hasty newspaper writing into the realm of real literature; but it cannot become abiding literature. It has not a large enough idea to keep it alive. And to any one who loves worthy expression there is a sense of degradation in the use of fine literary powers for the description of purely transient local events. It is always regrettable when men with literary skill are available for the description of a ball game, or are exploited as worthy writers about a prize-fight. If a man has power to express ideas well, he ought to use that power for the expression of great ideas.

Many of us have seen a dozen books hailed as classic novels sure to live, each of them the

great American novel at last, the author to be compared with Dickens and Thackeray and George Eliot. And the books have gone the way of all the earth. With some, the trouble is a weak, involved, or otherwise poor style. With most the trouble is lack of real ideas. Charles Dickens, to be sure, does deal with boarding-schools in England, with conditions which in their local form do not recur and are not familiar to us; but he deals with them as involving a great principle of the relation of society to youth, and so *David Copperfield* or *Oliver Twist* becomes a book for the life of all of us, and for all time. And even here it is evident that not all of Dickens's work will live, but only that which is least narrowly local and is most broadly human.

There is a further striking illustration in a familiar event in American history. Most young people are required to study Webster's speech in reply to Robert Hayne in the United States Senate, using it as a model in literary construction. The speech of Hayne is lost to our interest, yet the fact is that Hayne himself was gifted in expression, that by the standards of simple style his speech compares favorably with that of Webster. Yet reading Webster's reply takes one not to the local condition which was

concerning Hayne, but to a great principle of liberty and union. He shows that principle emerging in history; the local touches are lost to thought as he goes on, and a truth is expressed in terms of history which will be valid until history is ended. It is not simply Webster's style; it is that with his great idea which made his reply memorable.

That neither ideas nor style alone can keep literature alive is shown by literary history after Shakespeare. Just after him you have the "mellifluous poets" of the next period on the one hand, with style enough, but with such attenuated ideas that their work has died. Who knows Drayton or Brown or Wither? On the other hand, there came the metaphysicians with ideas in abundance, but not style, and their works have died.

Here, then, is the English Bible becoming the chief English classic by the wedding of great ideas to worthy expression. From one point of view this early seventeenth century was an opportune time for making such a classic. Theology was a popular subject. Men's minds had found a new freedom, and they used it to discuss great themes. They even began to sing. The reign of Elizabeth had prepared the way. The English scholar Hoare traces this new liberty

to the sailing away of the Armada and the releasing of England from the perpetual dread of Spanish invasion. He says that the birds felt the free air, and sang as they had never sung before and as they have not often sung since. But this was not restricted to the birds of English *song*. It was a period of remarkable awakening in the whole intellectual life of England, and that intellectual life was directing itself among the common people to religion. Another English writer, Eaton, says a profounder word in tracing the awakening to the reformation, saying that it "could not fail, from the very nature of it, to tinge the literature of the Elizabethan era. It gave a logical and disputatious character to the age and produced men mighty in the Scriptures."[1] A French visitor went home disgusted because people talked of nothing but theology in England. Grotius thought all the people of England were theologians. James's chief pride was his theological learning. It did not prove difficult to find half a hundred men in small England instantly recognized as experts in Scripture study. The people were ready to welcome a book of great ideas. Let us pass by those ideas a moment, remembering that they are not enough in them-

[1] T. R. Eaton, *Shakespeare and the Bible*, p. 2.

selves to give the work literary value, and turn our minds to the style of the English Bible.

From this point of view the times were not perfectly opportune for a piece of pure English literature, though it was the time which produced Shakespeare. A definite movement was on to refine the language by foreign decorations. Not even Shakespeare avoids it always. No writer of the time avoids it wholly. The dedication of the King James version shows that these scholars themselves did not avoid it. In that dedication, and their preface, they give us fine writing, striving for effect, ornamental phrases characteristic of the time. Men were feeling that this English language was rough and barbarous, insufficient, needing enlargement by the addition of other words constructed in a foreign form. The essays of Lord Bacon are virtually contemporaneous with this translation. Macaulay says a rather hard word in calling his style "odious and deformed,"[1] but when one turns from Bacon to the English Bible there is a sharp contrast in mere style, and it favors the Bible. The contrast is as great as that which Carlyle first felt between the ideas of Shakespeare and those of the Bible when he said that "this world is a catholic kind of place; the

[1] *Essay on John Dryden.*

Puritan gospel and Shakespeare's plays: such a pair of facts I have rarely seen save out of one chimerical generation."[1] And that gives point to the word already quoted from Hallam that the English of the King James version is not the English of James I.

Four things helped to determine the simplicity and pure English—unornamented English—of the King James version, made it, that is, the English classic. Two of these things have been dealt with already in other connections. First, that it was a Book for the people, for the people of the middle level of language; a work by scholars, but not chiefly for scholars, intended rather for the common use of common people. Secondly, that the translators were constantly beholden to the work of the past in this same line. Where Wiclif's words were still in use they used them. That tended to fix the language by the use which had already become natural.

The other two determining influences must be spoken of now. The third lies in the fact that the English language was still plastic. It had not fallen into such hard forms that its words were narrow or restricted. The truth is that from the point of view of pure literature the

[1] *Historical Sketches, Hampton Court Conference.*

Bible is better in English than it is in Greek or Hebrew. That is, the English of the King James version as English is better than the Greek of the New Testament as Greek. As for the Hebrew there was little development for many generations; Renan thinks there was none at all. The difference comes from the point of time in the growth of the tongue when the Book was written. The Greek was written when the language was old, when it had differentiated its terms, when it had become corrupted by outside influence. The English version was written when the language was new and fresh, when a word could be taken and set in its meaning without being warped from some earlier usage. The study of the Greek Testament is always being complicated by the effort to bring into its words the classical meaning, when so far as the writers of the New Testament were concerned they had no interest in the classical meaning, but only in the current meaning of those words. In the English language there was as yet no classical meaning; it was exactly that meaning that these writers were giving the words when they brought them into their version.[1] There is large advantage in the fact that the age was not a scientific one, that the language had not be-

[1] Trevelyan, *England under the Stuarts*, p. 54.

come complicated. So it becomes interesting to observe with Professor March that ninety-three per cent. of these words, counting also repetitions, are native English words. The language was new, was still plastic. It had not been stiffened by use. It received its set more definitely from the English Bible than from any other one work—more than from Shakespeare, whose influence was second.

The fourth fact which helped to determine its English style is the loyalty of the translators to the original, notably the Hebrew. It is a common remark of the students of the original tongues that the Hebrew and Greek languages are peculiarly translatable. That is notable in the Hebrew. It is not a language of abstract terms. The tendency of language is always to become vague, since we are lazy in the use of it. We use one word in various ways, and a pet one for many ideas. Language is always more concrete in its earlier forms. In this period of the concrete English language, then, the translation was made from the Hebrew, which was also a concrete, figurative language itself. The structure of the Hebrew sentence is very simple. There are no extended paragraphs in it. It is somewhat different in the New Testament, where these paragraphs are found, certainly in

the Pauline Greek; but even there the extended sentences are broken into clauses which can be taken as wholes. The English version shows constantly the marks of the Hebrew influence in the simplicity of its phrasing. Renan says that the Hebrew "knows how to make propositions, but not how to link them into paragraphs." So the earlier Bible stories are like a child's way of talking. They let one sentence follow another, and their unity is found in the overflowing use of the word "and"—one fact hung to another to make a story, but not to make an argument. In the first ten chapters of I Samuel, for example, there are two hundred and thirty-eight verses; one hundred and sixty of them begin with *and*. There are only twenty-six of the whole which have no connective word that thrusts them back upon the preceding verse.

In the Hebrew language, also, most of the emotions are connected either in the word used or in the words accompanying it with the physical condition that expresses it. Over and over we are told that "he opened his mouth and said," or, "he was angry and his countenance fell." Anger is expressed in words which tell of hard breathing, of heat, of boiling tumult, of trembling. We would not trouble to say that. The opening of the mouth to speak or the fall-

ing of the countenance in anger, we would take for granted. The Hebrew does not. Even in the description of God you remember the terms are those of common life; He is a shepherd when shepherds are writing; He is a husbandman threshing out the nations, treading the wine-press until He is reddened with the wine—and so on. That is the natural method of the Hebrew language—concrete, vivid, never abstract, simple in its phrasing. The King James translators are exceedingly loyal to that original.

Professor Cook, of Yale, suggests that four traits make the Bible easy to translate into any language: universality of interest, so that there are apt to be words in any language to express what it means, since it expresses nothing but what men all talk about; then, the concreteness and picturesqueness of its language, avoiding abstract phrases which might be difficult to reproduce in another tongue; then, the simplicity of its structure, so that it can be taken in small bits, and long complicated sentences are not needed; and, finally, its rhythm, so that part easily follows part and the words catch a kind of swing which is not difficult to imitate. That is a very true analysis. The Bible is the most easily translated book there is, and has become the classic for more languages than any

other one book. It is brought about in part in our English version by the faithfulness of the translators to the original.

Passing from these general considerations, let us look directly at the English Bible itself and its literary qualities. The first thing that attracts attention is its use of words, and since words lie at the root of all literature it is worth while to stop for them for a moment. Two things are to be said about the words: first, that they are few; and, secondly, that they are short. The vocabulary of the English Bible is not an extensive one. Shakespeare uses from fifteen to twenty thousand words. In Milton's verse he uses about thirteen thousand. In the Old Testament, in the Hebrew and Chaldaic tongue, there are fifty-six hundred and forty-two words. In the New Testament, in the Greek, there are forty-eight hundred. But in the whole of the King James version there are only about six thousand different words. The vocabulary is plainly a narrow one for a book of its size. While, as was said before, the translators avoided using the same word always for translation of the same original, they yet managed to recur to the same words often enough so that this comparatively small list of six thousand words,

about one-third Shakespeare's vocabulary, sufficed for the stating of the truth.

Then, secondly, the words are short, and in general short words are the strong ones. The average word in the whole Bible, including the long proper names, is barely over four letters, and if all the proper names are excluded the average word is just a little under four letters. Of course, another way of saying that is that the words are generally Anglo-Saxon, and, while in the original spelling they were much longer, yet in their sound they were as brief as they are in our present spelling. There is no merit in Anglo-Saxon words except in the fact that they are concrete, definite, non-abstract words. They are words that mean the same to everybody; they are part of common experience. We shall see the power of such words by comparing a simple statement in Saxon words from the English Bible with a comment of a learned theologian of our own time on them. The phrase is a simple one in the Communion service: "This is my body which is given for you." That is all Saxon. When our theologian comes to comment on it he says we are to understand that "the validity of the service does not lie in the quality of external signs and sacramental representation, but in its essential property and

substantial reality." Now there are nine words abstract in their meaning, Latin in their form. It is in that kind of words that the Bible could have been translated, and in our own day might even be translated. Addison speaks of that: "If any one would judge of the beauties of poetry that are to be met with in the divine writings, and examine how kindly the Hebrew manners of speech mix and incorporate with the English language, after having perused the Book of Psalms, let him read a literal translation of Horace or Pindar. He will find in these two last such an absurdity and confusion of style with such a comparative poverty of imagination, as will make him very sensible of what I have been here advancing." [1]

The fact that the words are short can be quickly illustrated by taking some familiar sections. In the Ten Commandments there are three hundred and nineteen words in all; two hundred and fifty-nine of them are words of one syllable, and only sixty are of two syllables and over. There are fifty words of two syllables, six of three syllables, of which four are such composite words that they really amount to two words of one and two syllables each, with four words of four syllables, and none over that.

[1] *The Spectator*, No. 405.

Make a comparison just here. There is a paragraph in Professor March's lectures on the English language where he is urging that its strongest words are purely English, not derived from Greek or Latin. He uses the King James version as illustration. If, now, we take three hundred and nineteen words at the beginning of that paragraph to compare with the three hundred and nineteen in the Ten Commandments, the result will be interesting. Where the Ten Commandments have two hundred and fifty-nine words of one syllable, Professor March has only one hundred and ninety-four; over against the fifty two-syllable words in the Ten Commandments, Professor March has sixty-five; over against their six words of three syllables, he has thirty-five; over against their four words of four syllables, he uses eighteen; and while the Ten Commandments have no word longer than four syllables, Professor March needs five words of five syllables and two words of six syllables to express his ideas.[1]

The same thing appears in the familiar 23d Psalm, where there are one hundred and nineteen

[1] This table will show the comparison at a glance:

Syllables	1	2	3	4	5	6	
The Commandments	259	50	6	4	0	0	319
Professor March	194	65	35	18	5	2	319

words in all, of which ninety-five are words of one syllable, and only three of three syllables, with none longer. In the Sermon on the Mount eighty two per cent. of the words in our English version are words of one syllable.

The only point urged now is that this kind of thing makes for strength in literature. Short words are strong words. They have a snap and a grip to them that long words have not. Very few men would grow angry over having a statement called a "prevarication" or "a disingenuous entanglement of ideas," but there is something about the word "lie" that snaps in a man's face. "Unjustifiable hypothecation" may be the same as stealing, but it would never excite one to be called "an unjustifiable hypothecator" as it does to be called a thief. At the very foundation of the strength of the literature of the English Bible there lies this tendency to short, clear-cut words.

Rising now from this basal element in the literature of the version, we come to the place where its style and its ideas blend in what we may call its earnestness. That is itself a literary characteristic. There is not a line of trifling in the book. No man would ever learn trifling from it. It takes itself with tremendous seriousness. Here are earnest men at work;

to them life is joyous, but it is no joke. That is why the element of humor in it is such a small one. It is there, to be sure. Many of its similes are intended to be humorous. A few of its incidents are humorous; but it has little of that element in it, as indeed little of our literature has that element markedly in it. We have a few exceptions. But what George Eliot says in *Adam Bede* is true, that wit is of a temporary nature, and does not deal with the deep and more lasting elements in life. The Bible is not a sad book. There are children at play in it; there are feasts and buoyant gatherings fully recounted. But it never trifles nor jests.

So it has given us a language of great dignity. Let Addison speak again: "How cold and dead does a prayer appear that is composed in the most elegant and polite forms of speech, which are natural to our tongue, when it is not heightened by that solemnity of phrase which may be drawn from the sacred writings. It has been said by some of the ancients that if the gods were to talk with men, they would certainly speak in Plato's style; but I think we may say, with justice, that when mortals converse with their Creator they cannot do it in so proper a style as in that of the Holy Scriptures."

As that earnestness of the literature of the

original precluded any great amount of humor in the wide range of its literary forms, so in the King James version it precluded any trifling expressions, any plays on words, even the duplication of such plays as can be found in the Hebrew or the Greek. You seldom find any turn of a word in the King James version, though you do occasionally find it in the Hebrew. One such punning expression occurs in the story of Samson (Judges xv:16), where our version reads: "With the jawbone of an ass, heaps upon heaps, with the jawbone of an ass have I slain a thousand men." In the Hebrew the words translated "ass" and "heaps" are variants of the same word. It comes near the Hebrew to say: "With the jawbone of an ass, masses upon masses," and so on. These translators would not risk reproducing such puns for fear of lowering the dignity of their results. There is a deadly seriousness about their work and so they never lose strength as they go on.

That earnestness grows out of a second fact which may be emphasized—namely, the greatness of the themes of Bible literature. Here is history, but it is not cast into fiction form. History always becomes more interesting for a first reading when it is in the form of fiction; but it always loses greatness in that form. Test it by

turning from a history of the American revolutionary or civil war to an historical novel that deals with the same period; or from a history of Scotland to the Waverly novels. In some degree the earnestness of the time is lost; the same facts are there; but they do not loom so large, nor do they seem so great. So there is power in the fact that the historical elements of the version are in stately form and are never sacrificed to the fictional form.

These great themes save the work from being local. It issues from life, but from life considered in the large. The themes of great literature are great enough to make their immediate surroundings forgotten. The English Bible deals with the great facts and the great problems. It is from the point of view of those great facts that it handles even commonplace things, and you forget the commonplaceness of the things in the greatness of the dealing. Take its attitude toward God. One needs the sense of that great theme to read it fairly. It quietly overlooks secondary causes, goes back of them to God. Partly that was because the original writers were ignorant of some of those secondary causes; partly that they knew them, but wanted to go farther back. Take the most outstanding instance, that of the Book of Jonah. All its

facts, without exception, can be told without mention of God, if one cared to do it. But there could not be anything like so great a story if it is told that way. One of his biographers says of Lincoln that there is nothing in his whole career which calls for explanation in other than a purely natural and human way. That is true, if one does not care to go any farther back than that. But the greatest story cannot be made out of Lincoln's life on those terms. There is not material enough; the life must be delocalized. It can be told without that larger view, so that it will be of interest to America and American children, but not so that it will be of value to generations of men in all countries and under all circumstances if it is told on those terms. Part of the greatness of Scripture, from a literary point of view, is that it has such a tremendous range of theme, and is saved from a mere narration of local events by seeing those events in the light of larger considerations.

Let that stand for one of the great facts. Now take one of the great problems. The thing that makes Job so great a classic is the fact that, while it is dealing with a character, he is standing for the problem of undeserved suffering. A man who has that before him, if he has at all the gift of imagination, is sure to write in a far

larger way than when he is dealing with a man with boils as though he were finally important. One could deal with Job as a character, and do a small piece of work. But when you deal with Job as a type, a much larger opportunity offers.

It is these great ideas, as to either facts or problems, that give the seriousness, the earnestness to the literature of the Bible. Men who express great ideas in literary form are not dilettante about them. One of the English writers just now prominent as an essayist is often counted whimsical, trifling. One of his near friends keenly resents that opinion, insists instead that he is dead in earnest, serious to the last degree, purposeful in all his work. What makes that so difficult to believe is that there is always a tone of chaffing in his essays. He seems always to be making fun of himself or of other people; and if he is dead in earnest he has the wrong style to make great literature or literature that will live long.

It is that earnestness and greatness of theme which puts the tang into the English of the Bible. Coleridge says that "after reading Isaiah or the Epistle to the Hebrews, Homer and Virgil are disgustingly tame, Milton himself barely tolerable." It need not be put quite so strongly

as that; but there is large warrant of fact in that expression.

Go a little farther in thought of the literary characteristics of the Bible. Notice the variety of the forms involved. Recall Professor Moulton's four cardinal points in literature, all of it taking one of these forms: either description, when a scene is given in the words of the author, as when Milton and Homer describe scenes without pretending to give the words of the actors throughout; or, secondly, presentation, when a scene is given in the words of those who took part in it, and the author does not appear, as, of course, in the plays of Shakespeare, when he never appears, but where all his sentiments are put in the words of others. As between those two, the Bible is predominantly a book of description, the authors for the most part doing the speaking, though there is, of course, an element of presentation. Professor Moulton goes on with the two other phases of literary form: prose, moving in the region limited by facts, as history and philosophy deal only with what actually has existence; and poetry, which by its Greek origin means creative literature. He reminds us that, however literature starts, these are the points toward which it moves, the paths it takes. All four of them appear in the

literature of the English Bible. You have more of prose and less of poetry; but the poetry is there, not in the sense of rhyme, but in the sense of real creative literature.

A more natural way of considering the literature has been followed by Professor Gardiner. He finds four elements in the literature of the Bible: its narrative, its poetry, its philosophizing, and its prophecy. It is not necessary for our purpose to go into details about that. We shall have all we need when we realize that, small as the volume of the book is, it yet does cover all these types of literature. Its difference from other books is that it deals with all of its subjects so compactly.

It will accent this fact of its variety if we note the musical element in the literature of the Bible. It comes in part from the form which marks the original Hebrew poetry. It has become familiar to say that it is not of the rhyming kind. Rather it is marked by the balancing of phrases or of ideas, so that it runs in couplets or in triplets throughout. In the Psalms there is always a balance of clauses. They are sometimes adversative; sometimes they are simply cumulative. Take several instances from the 119th Psalm, each a complete stanza of Hebrew poetry; (verse 15) "I will meditate in thy pre-

cepts, and have respect unto thy ways"; or this (verse 23), "Princes also did sit and speak against me: but thy servant did meditate in thy statutes"; or this (verse 45), "And I will walk at liberty: for I seek thy precepts"; (verse 51,) "The proud have had me greatly in derision: yet have I not inclined from thy law." Each presents a parallel or a contrast of ideas. That is the characteristic mark of Hebrew poetry. It results in a kind of rhythm of the English which makes it very easy to set to music. Some of it can be sung, though for some of it only the thunder is the right accompaniment. But it is not simply in the balance of phrases that the musical element appears. Sometimes it is in a natural but rhythmic consecution of ideas. The 35th chapter of Isaiah, for example, is not poetic in the Hebrew, yet it is remarkably musical in the English. Read it aloud from our familiar version:

"The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose. It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing; the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon; they shall see the glory of the Lord, and the excellency of our God. Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees. Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear

not: behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompense; He will come and save you. Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as a hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert. And the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water: in the habitation of dragons, where each lay, shall be grass with reeds and rushes. And a highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein. No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk there: and the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away."

That can be set to music as it stands. You catch the same form in the familiar 13th chapter of I Corinthians, the chapter on Charity. It could be almost sung throughout. This musical element is in sharp contrast with much else in the Scripture, where necessity does not permit that literary form. For example, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, which is argumentative throughout, there is no part except its quotations

which has ever been set to music for uses in Christian worship. It is rugged and protracted in its form, and has no musical element about it. The contrast within the Scripture of the musical and the unmusical is a very marked one.

Add to the thought of the earnestness and variety of the Scripture a word about the simplicity of its literary expression. There is nothing meretricious in its style. There is no effort to say a thing finely. The translators have avoided all temptation to grow dramatic in reproducing the original. Contrast the actual English Bible with the narratives or other literary works that have been built up out of it. Read all that the Bible tells about the loss of Paradise, and then read Milton's "Paradise Lost." Nearly all of the conceptions of Milton's greatest poem are built up from brief Scripture references. But Milton becomes subtle in his analysis of motives; he enlarges greatly on events. Scripture never does that. It gives us very few analyses of motive from first to last. That is not the method nor the purpose of Scripture. It tells the story in terms that move on the middle level of speech and the middle level of understanding, while Milton labors with it, complicates it, entangling it with countless

details which are to the Scripture unimportant. It goes straight to the simple and fundamental elements in the account. Take a more modern illustration. Probably the finest poem of its length in the English language is Browning's "Saul." It is built out of one incident and a single expression in the Bible story of Saul and David. The incident is David's being called from his sheep to play his harp and to sing before Saul in the fits of gloom which overcome him; the expression is the single saying that David loved Saul. Taking that incident and that expression, Browning writes a beautiful poem with many decorative details, with keen analysis of motive, with long accounts of the way David felt when he rendered his service, and how his heart leaped or sang. Imagine finding Browning's familiar phrases in Scripture: "The lilies we twine round the harp-chords, lest they snap neath the stress of the noontide—those sunbeams like swords"; "Oh, the wild joy of living!" "Spring's arrowy summons," going "straight to the aim." That is very well for Browning, but it is not the Scripture way; it is too complicated. All that the Bible says can be said anywhere; Browning's "Saul" could not possibly be reproduced in other languages. It would need a glossary or a commentary to make

it intelligible. It is beautiful English, and great because it has taken a great idea and clothed it in worthy expression. But the simplicity of the Bible narrative appears in sharp contrast with it. In my childhood my father used to tell of a man who preached on the creation, and with great detail and much elaboration and decoration told the story of creation as it is suggested in the first chapter of Genesis. When it was over he asked an old listener what he thought of his effort, and the only comment was, "You can't beat Moses!" Well, it would be difficult to surpass these Bible writers in simplicity, in going straight to the point, and making that plain and leaving it. Where the Bible takes a hundred words to tell the whole story Browning takes several hundred lines to tell it.

The simplicity of the Bible is largely because there is so little abstract reasoning in it. Having few or no abstract ideas, it does not need abstract words. Rather, it groups its whole movement around characters. Three eminent literary men were once asked to select the best reviews of a novel which had just appeared. One of the three statements which they rated highest said of the book that it "achieves the true purpose of a novel, which is to make comprehensible the philosophy of life of a whole community or race

of men by showing us how that philosophy accords with the impulses and yearnings of typical individuals." Few phrases could be more foreign to Bible phrases than those. But there is valuable suggestion in it for more than the literature of the novel. That is exactly what the Scripture does. Its reasoning is kept concrete by the fact that it is dealing with characters more than movements, and so it can speak in concrete words. That always makes for simplicity.

There are two elements common to the history of literature about which a special word is deserved. I mean the dramatic and the oratorical elements. The difference between the dramatic and the oratorical is chiefly that in dramatic writing there is a scene in which many take part, and in the oratorical writing one man presents the whole scene, however dramatic the surroundings. There is not a great deal of either in the Scripture. There is no formal drama, nothing that could be acted as it stands. It is true, to be sure, that Job can be cast into dramatic form by a sufficient manipulation, but it is quite unlikely, in spite of some scholars, that it was ever meant to be a formal drama for action. It does move in cycles in the appearance of its characters, and it does close in a way

to take one back to the beginning. It has many marks of the drama, and yet it seems very unlikely that it was ever prepared with that definitely in mind. On the other hand, a most likely explanation of the Song of Solomon is that it is a short drama which appears in our Bible without any character names, as though you should take "Hamlet" and print it continuously, indicating in no way the change of speakers nor any movement. The effort has been measurably successful to discover and insert the names of the probable speakers. That seems to be the one exception to the general statement that there is no formal drama in the Scripture. But there are some very striking dramatic episodes, and they are made dramatic for us very largely by the way they are told. One of the earlier is in I Kings xviii:21–39. It is almost impossible to read it aloud without dramatic expression:

"And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? if the Lord be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word. Then said Elijah unto the people, I, even I only, remain a prophet of the Lord; but Baal's prophets are four hundred and fifty men. Let them therefore give us two bullocks; and let them choose one bullock for themselves, and cut it in pieces, and lay it on wood,

and put no fire under; and I will dress the other bullock, and lay it on wood, and put no fire under: and call ye on the name of your gods, and I will call on the name of the Lord: and the God that answereth by fire, let him be God. And all the people answered and said, It is well spoken. And Elijah said unto the prophets of Baal, Choose you one bullock for yourselves, and dress it first; for ye are many; and call on the name of your gods, but put no fire under. And they took the bullock which was given them, and they dressed it, and called on the name of Baal from morning until noon, saying, O Baal, hear us. But there was no voice, nor any that answered. And they leaped upon the altar which was made. And it came to pass at noon, that Elijah mocked them, and said, Cry aloud; for he is a god; either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is in a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awakened. And they cried aloud, and cut themselves after their manner with knives and lancets, till the blood gushed out upon them. And it came to pass, when midday was past, and they prophesied until the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that there was neither voice, nor any to answer, nor any that regarded. And Elijah said unto all the people, Come near unto me. And all the people came near unto him. And he repaired the altar of the Lord that was broken down. And Elijah took twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob, unto whom the word of the Lord came, saying, Israel shall be thy name. And with the stones he built an altar in the name of the Lord; and he made a trench about the altar, as great

as would contain two measures of seed. And he put the wood in order, and cut the bullock in pieces, and laid him on the wood, and said, Fill four barrels with water, and pour it on the burnt sacrifice, and on the wood. And he said, Do it the second time. And they did it the second time. And he said, Do it the third time. And they did it the third time. And the water ran round about the altar; and he filled the trench also with water. And it came to pass at the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that Elijah the prophet came near, and said, Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things at thy word. Hear me, O Lord, hear me, that this people may know that thou art the Lord God, and that thou hast turned their heart back again. Then the fire of the Lord fell, and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench. And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces: and they said, The Lord, he is the God; the Lord, he is the God."

That is not simply a dramatic event; that is a striking telling of it. It is more than a narrative. In narrative literature the scene is accepted as already constructed. In dramatic literature such appeal is made to the imagination that the reader reconstructs the scene for himself. We are not told in this how Elijah felt, or how he acted, nor how the people as a whole

looked, nor the setting of the scene; but if one reads it with care it makes its own setting. The scene constructs itself.

The dramatic style does not prevail at most important points of the Scripture, because it is a fictitious style for the presenting of truth. It inevitably suggests superficiality. Things actually do not happen in life as they do in drama.

One of our latest biographers says that a scientific historian is always suspicious of dramatic events.[1] They may be true, but they are more liable to be afterthoughts, like the bright answers we could have made to our opponents if we had only thought of them at the time. You never lose the sense of unreality in the very construction of a drama. Life cannot be crowded into two or three hours, and justice does not come out as the drama makes it do. So that at most important points of the Scripture dramatic writing does not appear. The account of the carrying away into captivity of the children of Israel is at no point dramatic, though you can see instantly what a great opportunity there was for it. It is simply narrative. It is noticeable that none of the accounts of the crucifixion is at all dramatic. They are all simply narrative. The imagination does not

[1] McGiffert, *Life of Martin Luther.*

immediately conjure up the scene. There may be two reasons for that. One is that there are involved several hours in which there is no action recorded. The other is that by the time the accounts were written the actual events were submerged in importance by their unworded meaning. The account of the conversion of Paul, on the other hand, brief as it is, has at least minor dramatic elements in it. On the whole, the Old Testament is far more dramatic than the New.

There is even less of the oratorical element in the Scripture. There is, to be sure, a considerable amount of quotation, and men do speak at some length, but seldom oratorically. The prophetical writings are generally too fragmentary to suggest oratory, and the quotations in the New Testament, especially from the preaching of our Lord, are evidently for the most part excerpts from longer addresses than are given. There are few of the statements of Paul, as in the 26th chapter of Acts, which could be delivered oratorically; but here again the Old Testament is more marked than the New. The earliest specimen of oratory is also one of the finest specimens. It is in the 44th chapter of Genesis, and is the account of Judah's reply to his unrecognized brother Joseph:

"Then Judah came near unto him, and said, O my lord, let thy servant, I pray thee, speak a word in my lord's ears, and let not thine anger burn against thy servant: for thou art even as Pharoah. My lord asked his servants, saying, Have ye a father, or a brother? And we said unto my lord, We have a father, an old man, and a child of his old age, a little one; and his brother is dead, and he alone is left of his mother, and his father loveth him. And thou saidst unto thy servants, Bring him down unto me, that I may set mine eyes upon him. And we said unto my lord, The lad cannot leave his father: for if he should leave his father, his father would die. And thou saidst unto thy servant, Except your youngest brother come down with you, ye shall see my face no more. And it came to pass when we came up unto thy servant my father, we told him the words of my lord. And our father said, Go again and buy us a little food. And we said, We cannot go down; if our youngest brother be with us, then we will go down: for we may not see the man's face, except our youngest brother be with us. And thy servant my father said unto us, Ye know that my wife bare me two sons: and the one went out from me, and I said, Surely he is torn in pieces; and I saw him not since: and if ye take this also from me, and mischief befall him, ye shall bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave. Now therefore when I come to thy servant my father, and the lad be not with us; seeing that his life is bound up in the lad's life; it shall come to pass, when he seeth that the lad is not with us, that he will die: and thy servants shall bring down the gray hairs of thy servant our

father with sorrow to the grave. For thy servant became surety for the lad unto my father, saying, If I bring him not unto thee, then I shall bear the blame to my father for ever. Now therefore, I pray thee, let thy servant abide instead of the lad a bondman to my lord; and let the lad go up with his brethren. For how shall I go up to my father, and the lad be not with me? lest peradventure I see the evil that shall come on my father."

That is pure oratory, and it is greatly helped by the English expression of it. Here our King James version is finer than either of the other later versions, as indeed it is in almost all these sections where the phraseology is important for the ear.

We need not go farther. Part of these outstanding characteristics come to our version from the original, and might appear in any version of the Bible. Yet nowhere do even these original characteristics come to such prominence as in the King James translation; and it adds to them those that are peculiar to itself.

LECTURE IV

THE INFLUENCE OF THE KING JAMES VERSION ON ENGLISH LITERATURE

THE Bible is a book-making book. It is literature which provokes literature.

It would be a pleasure to survey the whole field of literature in the broadest sense and to note the creative power of the King James version; but that is manifestly impossible here. Certain limitations must be frankly made. Leave on one side, therefore, the immense body of purely religious literature, sermons, expositions, commentaries, which, of course, are the direct product of the Bible. No book ever caused so much discussion about itself and its teaching. That is because it deals with the fundamental human interest, religion. It still remains true that the largest single department of substantial books from our English presses is in the realm of religion, and after the purely recreative literature they are probably most widely read. Yet, they are not what we mean

at this time by the literary result of the English Bible.

Leave on one side also the very large body of political and historical writing. Much of it shows Bible influence. In the nature of the case, any historian of the past three hundred years must often refer to and quote from the English Bible, and must note its influence. An entire study could be devoted to the influence of the English Bible on Green or Bancroft or Freeman or Prescott—its influence on their matter and their manner. Another could be given to its influence on political writing and speaking. No great orator of the day would fail us of material, and the great political papers and orations of the past would only widen the field. Yet while some of this political and historical writing is recognized as literature, most of it can be left out of our thought just now.

It may aid in the limiting of the field to accept what Dean Stanley said in another connection: "By literature, I mean those great works that rise above professional or commonplace uses and take possession of the mind of a whole nation or a whole age."[1] This is one of the matters which we all understand until

[1] *Thoughts that Breathe.*

we begin to define it; we know what we mean until some one asks us.

The literature of which we are thinking in this narrower sense is in the sphere of art rather than in the sphere of distinct achievement. De Quincey's division is familiar: the literature of knowledge, and the literature of power. The function of the first is to teach; the function of the second is to move. Professor Dowden points out that between the two lies a third field, the literature of criticism. It seeks both to teach and to move. Our concern is chiefly with De Quincey's second field—the literature of power. In the first field, the literature of knowledge, must lie all history, with Hume and Gibbon; all science, with Darwin and Fiske; all philosophy, with Spencer and William James; all political writing, with Voltaire and Webster. Near that same field must lie many of those essays in criticism of which Professor Dowden speaks. This which we omit, this literature of knowledge, is powerful literature, though its main purpose is not to move, but to teach. We are only reducing our field so that we can survey it. For our uses just now we shall find pure literature taking the three standard forms: the poem, the essay, and the story. It is the influence of the English Bible on this

large field of literature which we are to observe.

Just for safety's sake, accept another narrowing of the field. The effect of the Bible and its religious teaching on the writer himself is a separate study, and is for the most part left out of consideration. It sounds correct when Milton says: "He who would not be frustrate of his power to write well ought himself to be a true poem." But there is Milton himself to deal with; irreproachable in morals, there are yet the unhappy years of his young wife to trouble us, and there were his daughters, who were not at peace with him, and whom after their service in his blindness he yet stigmatizes in his will as "undutiful children." Then, if you think of Shelley or Byron, you are troubled by their lives; or even Carlyle, the very master of the Victorian era—one would not like to scan his life according to the laws of true poetry. Then there is Coleridge, falling a prey to opium until, as years came, conscience and will seemed to go. Only a very ardent Scot will feel that he can defend Robert Burns at all points, and we would be strange Americans if we felt that Edgar Allen Poe was a model of propriety. That is a large and interesting field, but the Bible seems even to gain power as a book-making book

when it lays hold on the book-making proclivities of men who are not prepared to yield to its personal power. They may get away from it as religion; they do not get away from it as literature.

The first and most notable fact regarding the influence of the Bible on English literature is the remarkable extent of that influence. It is literally everywhere. If every Bible in any considerable city were destroyed, the Book could be restored in all its essential parts from the quotations on the shelves of the city public library. There are works, covering almost all the great literary writers, devoted especially to showing how much the Bible has influenced them.

The literary effect of the King James version at first was less than its social effect; but in that very fact lies a striking literary influence. For a long time it formed virtually the whole literature which was readily accessible to ordinary Englishmen. We get our phrases from a thousand books. The common talk of an intelligent man shows the effect of many authors upon his thinking. Our fathers got their phrases from one great book. Their writing and their speaking show the effect of that book.

It is a study by itself, and yet it is true that world literature is, as Professor Moulton puts it,

the autobiography of civilization. "A national literature is a reflection of the national history." Books as books reflect their authors. As literature they reflect the public opinion which gives them indorsement When, therefore, public opinion keeps alive a certain group of books, there is testimony not simply to those books, but to the public opinion which has preserved them. The history of popular estimates of literature is itself most interesting. On the other hand, some writers have been amusingly overestimated. No doubt Edward Fitzgerald, who gave us the "Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyâm" did some other desirable work; but Professor Moulton quotes this paragraph from a popular life of Fitzgerald, published in Dublin: "Not Greece of old in her palmiest days—the Greece of Homer and Demosthenes, of Eschylus, Euripides, and Sophocles, of Pericles, Leonidas, and Alcibiades, of Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle, of Solon and Lycurgus, of Apelles and Praxiteles—not even this Greece, prolific as she was in sages and heroes, can boast such a lengthy bead-roll as Ireland can of names immortal in history!" But "this was for Irish consumption." And popular opinion and even critical opinion has sometimes gone far astray in its destructive tendency. There were authoritative critics who

declared that Wordsworth, Shelley, and Coleridge wrote "unintelligible nonsense." George Meredith's style, especially in his poetry, was counted so bad that it was not worth reading. We are all near enough the Browning epoch to recall how the obscurity of his style impressed some and oppressed others. Alfred Austin, in 1869, said that "Mr. Tennyson has no sound pretensions to be called a great poet." Contemporary public opinion is seldom a final gauge of strength for a piece of literature. It takes the test of time. How many books we have seen come on the stage and then pass off again! Yet the books that have stayed on the stage have been kept there by public opinion expressing itself in the long run. The social influence of the King James version, creating a public taste for certain types of literature, tended to produce them at once.

English literature in these three hundred years has found in the Bible three influential elements: style, language, and material.

First, the style of the King James version has influenced English literature markedly. Professor Gardiner opens one of his essays with the dictum that "in all study of English literature, if there be any one axiom which may be accepted without question, it is that the ultimate stan-

dard of English prose style is set by the King James version of the Bible."[1] You almost measure the strength of writing by its agreement with the predominant traits of this version. Carlyle's weakest works are those that lose the honest simplicity of its style in a forced turgidity and affected roughness. His *Heroes and Hero Worship* or his *French Revolution* shows his distinctive style, and yet shows the influence of this simpler style, while his *Frederick the Great* is almost impossible because he has given full play to his broken and disconnected sentences. On the other hand, Macaulay fails us most in his striving for effect, making nice balance of sentences, straining his "either-or," or his "while-one-was-doing-this-the-other-was-doing-that." Then his sentences grow involved, and his paragraphs lengthen, and he swings away from the style of the King James version. "One can say that if any writing departs very far from the characteristics of the English Bible it is not good English writing."

The second element which English literature finds in the Bible is its *language*. The words of the Bible are the familiar ones of the English tongue, and have been kept familiar by the use of the Bible. The result is that "the path of

[1] *Atlantic Monthly*, May, 1900, p. 684.

literature lies parallel to that of religion. They are old and dear companions, brethren indeed of one blood; not always agreeing, to be sure; squabbling rather in true brotherly fashion now and then; occasionally falling out very seriously and bitterly; but still interdependent and necessary to each other."[1] Years ago a writer remarked that every student of English literature, or of English speech, finds three works or subjects referred to, or quoted from, more frequently than others. These are the Bible, tales of Greek and Roman mythology, and *Æsop's Fables*. Of these three, certainly the Bible furnishes the largest number of references. There is reason for that. A writer wants an audience. Very few men can claim to be independent of the public for which they write. There is nothing the public will be more apt to understand and appreciate quickly than a passing reference to the English Bible. So it comes about that when Dickens is describing the injustice of the Murdstones to little David Copperfield, he can put the whole matter before us in a parenthesis: "Though there was One once who set a child in the midst of the disciples." Dickens knew that his readers would at once catch the meaning of that reference, and would feel the contrast

[1] Chapman, *English Literature in Account with Religion.*

between the scene he was describing and that simple scene. Take any of the great books of literature and black out the phrases which manifestly come directly from the English Bible, and you would mark them beyond recovery.

But English literature has found more of its material in the Bible than anything else. It has looked there for its characters, its illustrations, its subject-matter. We shall see, as we consider individual writers, how many of their titles and complete works are suggested by the Bible. It is interesting to see how one idea of the Scripture will appear and reappear among many writers. Take one illustration. The Faust story is an effort to make concrete one verse of Scripture: "What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" Professor Moulton reminds us that the Faust legend appeared first in the Middle Ages. In early English, Marlowe has it, Calderon put it into Spanish, the most familiar form of it is Goethe's, while Philip Bailey has called his account of it *Festus*. In each of those forms the same idea occurs. A man sells his soul to the devil for the gaining of what is to him the world. That is one of a good many ideas which the Bible has given to literature. The prodigal son has been another prolific source of literary

writing. The guiding star is another. Others will readily come to mind.

With that simple background let our minds move down the course of literary history. Style, language, material—we will easily think how much of each the Bible has given to all our great writers if their names are only mentioned. There are four groups of these writers.

1. The Jacobean, who wrote when and just after our version was made.

2. The Georgian, who graced the reigns of the kings whose name the period bears.

3. The Victorian.

4. The American.

There is an attractive fifth group comprising our present-day workers in the realm of pure literature, but we must omit them and give our attention to names that are starred.

It is familiar that in the time of Elizabeth, "England became a nest of singing birds." In the fifty years after the first English theater was erected, the middle of Elizabeth's reign, fifty dramatic poets appeared, many of the first order. Some were distinctly irreligious, as were many of the people whose lives they touched. Such men as Ford, Marlowe, Massinger, Webster, Beaumont, and Fletcher stand like a chorus

around Shakespeare and Ben Jonson as leaders. As Taine puts it: "They sing the same piece together, and at times the chorus is equal to the solo; but only at times."[1] Cultured people to-day know the names of most of these writers, but not much else, and it does not heavily serve our argument to say that they felt the Puritan influence; but they all did feel it either directly or by reaction.

Edmund Spenser and his friend, Sir Philip Sidney, had closed their work before the King James version appeared, yet the *Faerie Queene* in its religious theory is Puritan to the core, and Sidney is best remembered by his paraphrases of Scripture. The influence of both was even greater in the Jacobean than in their own period.

It is hardly fair even to note the Elizabethan Shakespeare as under the influence of the King James version. The Bible influenced him markedly, but it was the Genevan version prepared during the exile of ths scholars under Bloody Mary, or the Bishops' Bible prepared under Elizabeth. Those versions were familiar as household facts to him. "No writer has assimilated the thoughts and reproduced the words of Holy Scripture more copiously than

[1] *History of English Literature*, chap. iii.

Shakespeare." Dr. Furnivall says that "he is saturated with the Bible story," and a century ago Capel Lloft said quaintly that Shakespeare "had deeply imbibed the Scriptures." But the King James version appeared only five years before his death, and it is in some sense fairer to say that Shakespeare and the King James version are formed by the same influence as to their English style. The Bishop of St. Andrews even devotes the first part of his book on Shakespeare and the Bible to a study of parallels between the two in peculiar forms of speech, and thinks it "probable that our translators of 1611 owed as much to Shakespeare as, or rather far more than, he owed to them." [1] It is generally agreed that only two of his works were written after our version appeared. Several other writers have devoted separate volumes to noting the frequent use by Shakespeare of Biblical phrases and allusions and characters taken from early versions. It is a very tempting field, and we pass it by only because it is hardly in the range of the study we are now making.

When, however, we come to John Milton (1608–1674), we remember he was only three years old when our version was issued; that when at fifteen, an undergraduate in Cambridge,

[1] Wordsworth, *Shakespeare's Knowledge and Use of the Bible*, p. 9.

he made his first paraphrases, casting two of the Psalms into meter, the version he used was this familiar one. A biographer says he began the day always with the reading of Scripture and kept his memory deeply charged with its phrases. In later life the morning chapter was generally from the Hebrew, and was followed by an hour of silence for meditation, an exercise whose influence no man's style could escape. As a writer he moved steadily toward the Scripture and the religious teaching which it brought his age. His earlier writing is a group of poems largely secular, which yet show in phrases and expressions much of the influence of his boyhood study of the Bible, as well as the familiar use of mythology. The memorial poem "Lycidas," for example, contains the much-quoted reference to Peter and his two keys—

> "Last came and last did go
> The pilot of the Galilean lake;
> Two massy keys he bore of metals twain,
> (The golden opes, the iron shuts amain)."

But after these poems came the period of his prose, the work which he supposed was the abiding work of his life. George William Curtis told a friend that our civil war changed his own literary style: "That roused me to see that I

had no right to spend my life in literary leisure. I felt that I must throw myself into the struggle for freedom and the Union. I began to lecture and to write. The style took care of itself. But I fancy it is more solid than it was thirty years ago." That is what happened to Milton when the protectorate came.[1] It made his style more solid. He did not mean to live as a poet. He felt that his best energies were being put into his essays in defense of liberty, on the freedom of the press and on the justice of the beheading of Charles, in which service he sacrificed his sight. All of it is shot through with Scripture quotations and arguments, and some of it, at least, is in the very spirit of Scripture. The plea for larger freedom of divorce issued plainly from his own bitter experience; but his main argument roots in a few Bible texts taken out of their connection and urged with no shadow of question of their authority. Indeed, when he comes to his more religious essays, his heavy argument is that there should be no religion permitted in England which is not drawn directly from the Bible; which, therefore, he urges must be common property for all the people. There is a curious bit of evidence that the men of his own time did not realize his power as a

[1] Strong, *The Theology of the Poets.*

poet. In Pierre Bayle's critical survey of the literature of the time, he calls Milton "the famous apologist for the execution of Charles I.," who "meddled in poetry and several of whose poems saw the light during his life or after his death!" For all that, Milton was only working on toward his real power, and his power was to be shown in his service to religion. His three great poems, in the order of their value, are, of course, "Paradise Lost," "Samson Agonistes," and "Paradise Regained." Whoever knows anything of Milton knows these three and knows they are Scriptural from first to last in phrase, in allusion, and, in part at least, in idea. There is not time for extended illustration. One instance may stand for all, which shall illustrate how Milton's mind was like a garden where the seeds of Scripture came to flower and fruit. He will take one phrase from the Bible and let it grow to a page in "Paradise Lost." Here is an illustration which comes readily to hand. In the Genesis it is said that "the spirit of God moved on the face of the waters." The verb suggests the idea of brooding. There is only one other possible reference (Psalm xxiv: 2) which is included in this statement which Milton makes out of that brief word in the Genesis:

"On the watery calm
His broadening wings the Spirit of God outspread,
And vital virtue infused, and vital warmth
Throughout the fluid mass, but downward purged
The black tartareous cold infernal dregs,
Adverse to life; then formed, then con-globed,
Like things to like; the rest to several place
Disparted, and between spun out the air—
And earth self-balanced on her center swung."

Any one familiar with Milton will recognize that as a typical instance of the way in which a seed idea from the Scripture comes to flower and fruit in him. The result is that more people have their ideas about heaven and hell from Milton than from the Bible, though they do not know it.

It seems hardly fair to use John Bunyan (1628–1688) as an illustration of the influence of the English Bible on literature, because his chief work is composed so largely in the language of Scripture. *Pilgrim's Progress* is the most widely read book in the English language after the Bible. Its phrases, its names, its matter are either directly or indirectly taken from the Bible. It has given us a long list of phrases which are part of our literary and religious capital. Thackeray took the motto of one of his best-known books from the Bible; but the

title, *Vanity Fair*, comes from *Pilgrim's Progress*. When a discouraged man says he is "in the slough of despond," he quotes Bunyan; and when a popular evangelist tells the people that the burden of sin will roll away if they look at the cross, "according to the Bible," he ought to say according to Bunyan. But all this was only the outcome of the familiarity of Bunyan with the Scripture. It was almost all he did know in a literary way. Macaulay says that "he knew no language but the English as it was spoken by the common people; he had studied no great model of composition, with the exception of our noble translation of the Bible. But of that his knowledge was such that he might have been called a living concordance." [1]

After these three—Shakespeare, Milton, and Bunyan—there appeared another three, very much their inferiors and having much less influence on literary history. I mean Dryden, Addison, and Pope. It is not necessary to credit the Scripture with much of Dryden's spirit, nor with much of his style, and certainly not with his attitude toward his fellows; but it is a constant surprise in reading Dryden to discover how familiar he was with the King James version. Walter Scott insists that Dryden was at

[1] *History of England*, vol. III., p. 220.

heart serious, that "his indelicacy was like the forced impudence of a bashful man." That is generous judgment. But there is this to be said: as he grows more serious he falls more into Bible words. If he writes a political pamphlet he calls it "Absalom and Ahithophel." In it he holds the men of the day up to scorn under Bible names. They are Zimri and Shimei, and the like. When he is falling into bitterest satire, his writing abounds in these Biblical allusions which could be made only by one who was very familiar with the Book. Quotations cannot be abundant, of course, but there is a great deal of this sort of thing:

"Sinking, he left his drugget robe behind,
Borne upward by a subterranean wind,
The mantle fell to the young prophet's part,
With double portion of his father's art.".

In his Epistles there is much of the same sort. When he writes to Congreve he speaks of the fathers, and says:

"Their's was the giant race before the flood."

Farther on he says:

"Our builders were with want of genius curst,
The second temple was not like the first."

Now Dryden may have been, as Macaulay said, an "illustrious renegade," but all his writing shows the influence of the language and the ideas of the King James version. Whenever we sing the "Veni Creator" we sing John Dryden.

So we sing Addison in the paraphrase of Scripture, which Haydn's music has made familiar:

> "The spacious firmament on high,
> With all the blue ethereal sky."

While Dryden yielded to his times, Addison did not, and the *Spectator* became not only a literary but a moral power. In the effort to make it so he was thrown back on the largest moral influence of the day, the Bible, and throughout the *Spectator* and through all of Addison's writing you find on all proper occasions the Bible pressed to the front. Here again Taine puts it strikingly: "It is no small thing to make morality fashionable; Addison did it, and it remains fashionable."

If we speak of singing, we may remember that we sing the hymn of even poor little dwarfed invalid Alexander Pope. He was born the year Bunyan died, born at cross-purposes with the world. He could write a bitter satire, like the "Dunciad"; he could give the world The Iliad

and The Odyssey in such English that we know them far better than in the Greek of Homer; but in those rare moments when he was at his better self he would write his greater poem, "The Messiah," in which the movement of Scripture is outlined as it could be only by one who knew the English Bible. And when we sing—

"Rise, crowned with light, imperial Salem, rise"—

it is worth while to realize that the voice that first sung it was that of the irritable little poet who found some of his scant comfort in the grand words and phrases and ideas of our English Bible.

With these six—Shakespeare, Milton, Bunyan, Dryden, Addison, and Pope—the course of the Jacobean literature is sufficiently measured. There are many lesser names, but these are the ones which made it an epoch in literature, and these are at their best under the power of the Bible.

In the Georgian group we need to call only five great names which have had creative influence in literature. Ordinary culture in literature will include some acquaintance with each of them. In the order of their death they are

Shelley (1822), Byron (1824), Coleridge (1831), Walter Scott (1832), and Wordsworth (1850). The last long outlived the others; but he belongs with them, because he was born earlier than any other in the group and did his chief work in their time and before the later group appeared. Except Wordsworth, all these were gone before Queen Victoria came to the throne in 1837. Three other names could be called: Keats, Robert Burns, and Charles Lamb. All would illustrate what we are studying. Keats least of all and Burns most. They are omitted here not because they did not feel the influence of the English Bible, not because they do not constantly show its influence, but because they are not so creative as the others; they have not so influenced the current of literature. At any rate, the five named will represent worthily and with sufficient completeness the Georgian period of English literature.

Nothing could reveal more clearly than this list how we are distinguishing the Bible as literature from the Bible as an authoritative book in morals. One would much dislike to credit the Bible with any part of the personal life of Shelley or Byron. They were friends; they were geniuses; but they were both badly afflicted with common moral leprosy. It is playing with

morals to excuse either of them because he was a genius. Nothing in the genius of either demanded or was served by the course of cheap immorality which both practised. It was not because Shelley was a genius that he married Harriet Westbrook, then ran away with Mary Godwin, then tried to get the two to become friends and neighbors until his own wife committed suicide; it was not his genius that made him yield to the influence of Emilia Viviani and write her the poem "Epipsychidion," telling her and the world that he "was never attached to that great sect who believed that each one should select out of the crowd a mistress or a friend" and let the rest go. That was not genius, that was just common passion; and our divorce courts are full of Shelleys of that type. So Byron's personal immorality is not to be explained nor excused on the ground of his genius. It was not genius that led him so astray in England that his wife had to divorce him, and that public opinion drove him out of the land. It was not his genius that sent him to visit Shelley and his mistress at Lake Geneva and seduce their guest, so that she bore him a daughter, though she was never his wife. It was not genius that made him pick up still another companion out of several in Italy and live with

her in immoral relation. In the name of common decency let no one stand up for Shelley and Byron in their personal characters! There are not two moral laws, one for geniuses and one for common people. Byron, at any rate, was never deceived about himself, never blamed his genius nor his conscience for his wrong. These are striking lines in "Childe Harold," in which he disclaims all right to sympathy, because,

> "The thorns which I have reaped are of the tree
> I planted,—they have torn me and I bleed.
> I should have known what fruit would spring from
> such a tree."

Shelley's wife would not say that for him. "In all Shelley did," she says, "he at the time of doing it believed himself justified to his own conscience." Well, so much the worse for Shelley! Geniuses are not the only men who can find good reason for doing what they want to do. One of Shelley's critics suggests that the trouble was his introduction into personal conduct of the imagination which he ought to have saved for his writing. Perhaps we might explain Byron's misconduct by reminding ourselves of his club-foot, and applying one code of morals to men with club-feet and another to men with normal feet.

If we speak of the influence of the Bible on these men, it must be on their literary work; and when we find it there, it becomes peculiar mark of its power. They had little sense of it as moral law. Their consciences approved it and condemned themselves, or else their delicate literary taste sensed it as a book of power.

This is notably true of Shelley. When he was still a student in Oxford he committed himself to the opinion of another writer, that "the mind cannot believe in the existence of God." He tries to work that out fully in his notes on "Queen Mab." When he was hardly yet of age he himself wrote that "The genius of human happiness must tear every leaf from the accursed Book of God, ere man can read the inscription on its heart." He once said that his highest desire was that there should be a monument to himself somewhere in the Alps which should be only a great stone with its face smoothed and this short inscription cut in it, "Percy Bysshe Shelley, Atheist."

It would seem that whatever Shelley drew of strength or inspiration from the Bible would be by way of reaction; but it is not so. However he may have hated the "accursed Book of God," his wife tells in her note on "The Revolt of Islam" that Shelley "debated whether he should devote

himself to poetry or metaphysics," and, resolving on the former, he "educated himself for it, engaging himself in the study of the poets of Greece, England, and Italy. To these, may be added," she goes on, "a constant perusal of portions of the Old Testament, the Book of Psalms, Job, Isaiah, and others, the sublime poetry of which filled him with delight." Not only did he catch the spirit of that poetry, but its phrases haunted his memory. In his best prose work, which he called *A Defense of Poetry*, there is an interesting revelation of the influence of his Bible reading upon him. Toward the end of the essay these two sentences occur: "It is inconsistent with this division of our subject to cite living poets, but posterity has done ample justice to the great names now referred to. Their errors have been weighed and found to have been dust in the balance; if their sins are as scarlet, they are now white as snow; they have been washed in the blood of the mediator and redeemer, Time." There is no more eloquent passage in the essay than the one of which this is part, and yet it is full of allusion to this Book from which all pages must be torn! Even in "Queen Mab" he makes Ahasuerus, the wandering Jew, recount the Bible story in such broad outlines as could be given only by a man who

was familiar with it. When Shelley was in Italy and the word came to him of the massacre at Manchester, he wrote his "Masque of Anarchy." There are few more melodious lines of his writing than those which occur in this long poem in the section regarding freedom. Four of those lines are often quoted. They are at the very heart of Shelley's best work. Addressing freedom, he says:

> "Thou art love: the rich have kissed
> Thy feet, and, like him following Christ,
> Gave their substance to the free,
> And through the rough world follow thee."

Page after page of Shelley reveals these half-conscious references to the Bible. There were two sources from which he received his passionate democracy. One was the treatment he received at Eton, and later at Oxford; the other is his frequent reading of the English Bible, even though he was in the spirit of rebellion against much of its teaching. In Browning's essay on Shelley, he reaches the amazing conclusion that "had Shelley lived, he would finally have ranged himself with the Christians," and seeks to justify it by showing that he was moving straight toward the positions of Paul and of David. Some of us may not see such rapid approach, but that

Shelley felt the drawing of God in the universe is plain enough.

The influence of the Bible is still more marked on Byron. He spent his childhood years at Aberdeen. There his nurse trained him in the Bible; and, though he did not live by it, he never lost his love for it, nor his knowledge of it. He tells of his own experience in this way: "I am a great reader of those books [the Bible], and had read them through and through before I was eight years old; that is to say, the Old Testament, for the New struck me as a task, but the other as a pleasure."[1] One of the earliest bits of his work is a paraphrase of one of the Psalms. His physical infirmity put him at odds with the world, while his striking beauty drew to him a crowd of admirers who helped to poison every spring of his genius. Even so, he held his love for the Bible. While Shelley often spoke of it in contempt, while he prided himself on his divergence from the path of its teaching, Byron never did. He wandered far, but he always knew it; and, though he could hardly find terms to express his contempt for the Church, there is no line of Byron's writing which is a slur at the Bible. On the other hand, much of his work reveals a passion for the beauty of it as

[1] Taine, English Literature, II., 279.

well as its truth. His most melodious writing is in that group of Hebrew melodies which were written to be sung. They demand far more than a passing knowledge of the Bible both for their writing and their understanding. There is a long list of them, but no one without a knowledge of the Bible would have known what he meant by his poem, "The Harp the Monarch Minstrel Swept." "Jephtha's Daughter" presumes upon a knowledge of the Old Testament story which would not come to one in a passing study of the Bible. "The Song of Saul Before his Last Battle" and the poem headed "Saul" could not have been written, nor can they be read intelligently by any one who does not know his Bible. Among Byron's dramas, two of which he thought most, were, "Heaven and Earth" and "Cain." When he was accused of perverting the Scripture in "Cain," he replied that he had only taken the Scripture at its face value. Both of the dramas are not only built directly out of Scriptural events, but imply a far wider knowledge of Scripture than their mere titles suggest.

There are striking references in many other poems, even in his almost vile poem, "Don Juan." The most notable instance is in the fifteenth canto, where he is speaking of persecuted sages and these lines occur:

"Was it not so, great Locke? and greater Bacon?
Great Socrates? And Thou Diviner still,
Whose lot it is by men to be mistaken,
And Thy pure creed made sanction of all ill?
Redeeming worlds to be by bigots shaken,
How was Thy toil rewarded?"

In a note on this passage Byron says: "As it is necessary in these times to avoid ambiguity, I say that I mean by 'Diviner still' *Christ.* If ever God was man—or man God—He was both. I never arraigned His creed, but the use or abuse of it. Mr. Canning one day quoted Christianity to sanction slavery, and Mr. Wilberforce had little to say in reply. And was Christ crucified that black men might be scourged? If so, He had better been born a mulatto, to give both colors an equal chance of freedom, or at least salvation." Byron could live far from the influence of the Bible in his personal life; but he never escaped its influence in his literary work.

Of Coleridge less needs to be said, because we think of him so much in terms of his more meditative musings, which are often religious. He himself tells of long and careful rereadings of the English Bible until he could say: In the Bible "there is more that finds me than I have experienced in all other books together; the words of the Bible find me at greater depths of

my being." Of course, that would influence his writing, and it did. Even in the "Rime of the Ancient Mariner" much of the phraseology is Scriptural. When the albatross drew near,

> "As if it had been a Christian soul,
> We hailed it in God's name."

When the mariner slept he gave praise to Mary, Queen of Heaven. He sought the shriving of the hermit-priest. He ends the story because he hears "the little vesper bell" which bids him to prayer. When you read his "Hymn Before Sunrise in the Vale of Chamounix" you find yourself reading the Nineteenth Psalm. He calls on the motionless torrents and the silent cataracts and the great Mont Blanc itself to praise God. Coleridge never had seen Chamounix, nor Mont Blanc, nor a glacier, but he knew his Bible. So he has his Christmas Carol along with all the rest. His poem of the Moors after the Civil War under Philip II. is Scriptural in its phraseology, and so is much else that he wrote. Frankly and willingly he yielded to its influence. In his "Table Talk" he often refers to the value of the Bible in the forming of literary style. Once he said: "Intense study of the Bible will keep any writer from being vulgar in point of style." [1]

[1] June 14, 1830.

The very mention of Coleridge makes one think of Wordsworth. They had a Damon and Pythias friendship. The Wordsworths were poor; they had only seventy pounds a year, and they were not ashamed. Coleridge called them the happiest family he ever saw. Wordsworth was not narrowly a Christian poet, he was not always seeking to put Christian dogma into poetry, but throughout he was expressing the Christian spirit which he had learned from the Bible. His poetry was one long protest against banishing God from the universe. It was literally true of him that "the meanest flower that grows can give thoughts that too often lie too deep for tears." If this were the time to be critical, one would think that too much was sometimes made of very minute occurrences; but this tendency to get back of the event and see how God is moving is learned best from Scripture, where Wordsworth himself learned it. If you read his "Intimations of Immortality," or the "Ode to Duty," or "Tintern Abbay," or even the rather labored "Excursion," you find yourself under the Scriptural influence.

There remains in this Georgian group the great prose master, Walter Scott. Mr. Gladstone said he thought Scott the greatest of his countrymen. John Morley suggested John Knox

instead. Mr. Gladstone replied: "No, the line must be drawn firmly between the writer and the man of action—no comparison there."[1] He went on to say that Burns is very fine and true, no doubt, "but to imagine a whole group of characters, to marshal them, to set them to work, and to sustain the action, I must count that the test of highest and most diversified quality." All who are fond of Scott will realize how constantly the scenes which he is describing group themselves around religious observances, how often men are held in check from deeds of violence by religious conception. Many of these scenes crystallize around a Scriptural event. Scott's boyhood was spent in scenes that reminded him of the power the Scripture had. He was drilled from his childhood in the knowledge of its words and phrases, and while his writing as a whole shows more of the Old Testament influence than of the New, even in his style he is strongly under Bible influence.

The preface to *Guy Mannering* tells us it is built around an old story of a father putting a lad to test under guidance of an ancient astrologer, shutting him up in a barren room to be tempted by the Evil One, leaving him only one safeguard, a Bible, lying on the table in the

[1] Morley, *Life of Gladstone*, vol. iii, p. 424.

middle of the room. In his introduction to *The Heart of Midlothian*, Scott makes one of the two men thrown into the water by the overturned coach remind the other that they "cannot complain, like Cowley, that Gideon's fleece remains dry while all around is moist; this is the reverse of the miracle." A little later a speaker describes novels as the Delilahs that seduce wise and good men from more serious reading. In the dramatic scene when Jeanie Deans faces the wretched George Staunton, who has so shamed the household, she exclaims: "O sir, did the Scripture never come into your mind, 'Vengeance is mine, and I will repay it?'" "Scripture!" he sneers, "why I had not opened a Bible for five years." "Wae's me, sir," said Jeanie—"and a minister's son, too!" Anthony Foster, in *Kenilworth*, looks down on poor Amy's body in the vault into which she has fallen, in response to what she thought was Leicester's whistle, and exclaims to Varney: "Oh, if there be judgment in heaven, thou hast deserved it, and will meet it! Thou hast destroyed her by means of her best affections—it is the seething of the kid in the mother's milk!" And when, next morning, Varney was found dead of the secret poison and with a sneering sarcasm on his ghastly face, Scott dismisses him

with the phrase: "The wicked man, saith the Scripture, hath no bonds in his death."

His characters use freely the familiar Bible events and phrases. In the *Fortunes of Nigel*, a story of the very period when our King James version was produced, Hildebrod declares that if he had his way Captain Peppercull should hang as high as Haman ever did. In *Kenilworth*, when Leicester gives Varney his signet-ring, he says, significantly: "What thou dost, do quickly." Of course, Isaac, the Jew in *Ivanhoe*, exclaims frequently in Old Testament terms. He wishes the wheels of the chariots of his enemies may be taken off, like those of the host of Pharoah, that they may drive heavily. He expects the Palmer's lance to be as powerful as the rod of Moses, and so on.

Scott was writing of the period when men stayed themselves with Scripture, and his men are all sure of God and Satan and angels and judgment and all eternal things. His son-in-law vouches for the old story that when Sir Walter was on his death-bed he asked Lockhart to read him something from the Book, and when Lockhart asked, "What book?" Scott replied: "Why do you ask? There is but one book, the Bible."

All this is scant justice to the Georgian group;

but it may give a hint of what the Bible meant even at that period, the period when its grip on men was most lax in all the later English history.

It is in the Victorian age (1840–1900) that the field is most bewildering. It is true, as Frederick Harrison says, that "this Victorian age has no Shakespeare or Milton, no Bacon or Hume, no Fielding or Scott—no supreme master in poetry, philosophy, or romance whose work is incorporated with the thought of the world, who is destined to form an epoch, to endure for centuries."[1] The genius of the period is more scientific than literary, yet we would be helpless if we had not already eliminated from our discussion everything but the works and writers of pure literature. The output of books has been so tremendous that it would be impossible to analyze the influences which have made them. There are in this Victorian period at least twelve great English writers who must be known, whose work affects the current of English literature. Many other names would need mention in any full history or any minute study; but it is not harsh judgment to say that the main current of literature would be the same without them.

[1] *Early Victorian Literature*, p. 9

A few of these lesser names will come to mind, and in the calling of them one realizes the influence, even on them, of the English Bible. Anthony Trollope wrote sixty volumes, the titles of most of which are now popularly unknown. He told George Eliot that it was not brains that explained his writing so much, but rather wax which he put in the seat of his chair, which held him down to his daily stint of work. He could boast, and it was worth the boasting, that he had never written a line which a pure woman could not read without a blush. His whole Framley Parsonage series abounds in Bible references and allusions. So Charlotte Brontë is in English literature, and *Jane Eyre* does prove what she was meant to prove, that a commonplace person can be made the heroine of a novel; but on all Charlotte Brontë's work is the mark of the rectory in which she grew up. So Thomas Grey has left his "Elegy" and his "Hymn to Adversity," and some other writing which most of us have forgotten or never knew. Then there are Maria Edgeworth and Jane Austen. We may even remember that Macaulay thought Jane Austen could be compared with Shakespeare, as, of course, she can be, since any one can be; but neither of these good women has strongly affected the literary current. Many

others could be named, but English literature would be substantially the same without them; and, though all might show Biblical influence, they would not illustrate what we are trying to discover. So we come, without apology to the unnamed, to the twelve, without whom English literature would be different. This is the list in the order of the alphabet: Matthew Arnold, Robert Browning (Mrs. Browning being grouped as one with him), Carlyle, Dickens, George Eliot, Charles Kingsley, Macaulay, Ruskin, Robert Louis Stevenson, Swinburne, Tennyson, and Thackeray.

It is dangerous to make such a list; but it can be defended. Literary history would not be the same without any one of them, unless possibly Swinburne, whose claim to place is rather by his work as critic than as creator. Nor is any name omitted whose introduction would change literary history.

Benjamin Jowett thought Arnold too flippant on religious things to be a real prophet. At any rate, this much is true, that the books in which Arnold dealt with the fundamentals of religion are his profoundest work. In his poetry the best piece of the whole is his "Rugby Chapel." His *Religion and Dogma* he himself calls an "essay toward a better apprehension of the Bible."

All through he urges it as the one Book which needs recovery. "All that the churches can say about the importance of the Bible and its religion we concur in." The book throughout is an effort to justify his own faith in terms of the Bible. The effort is sometimes amusing, because it takes such a logical and verbal agility to go from one to the other; but he is always at it. He is afraid in his soul that England will swing away from the Bible. He fears it may come about through neglect of the Bible on one hand, or through wrong teaching about it on the other. Not in his ideas alone, but markedly in his style, Arnold has felt the Biblical influence. He came at a time when there was strong temptation to fall into cumbrous German ways of speech. Against that Arnold set a simple phraseology, and he held out the English Bible constantly as a model by which the men of England ought to learn to write. He never gained the simplicity of the old Hebrew sentence, and sometimes his secondary clauses follow one another so rapidly that a reader is confused; but his words as a whole are simple and direct.

There is no need of much word on the spell of the Bible over Robert Browning and Mrs. Browning. It is not often that two singing-birds mate; but these two sang in a key pitched

for them by the Scripture as much as by any one influence. Many of their greatest poems have definite Biblical themes. In them and in others Biblical allusions are utterly bewildering to men who do not know the Bible well. For five years (1841–1846) Browning's poems appeared under the title *Bells and Pomegranates*. Scores of people wondered then, and wonder still, what "Pippa Passes" and "A Blot in the Scutcheon" and the others have to do with such a title. They have never thought, as Browning did, of the border of the beautiful robe of the high priest described in the Book of Exodus. The finest poem of its length in the English language is Browning's "Saul"; but it is only the story of David driving the evil spirit from Saul, sweeping on to the very coming of Christ. "The Death in the Desert" is the death of John, the beloved disciple. "Karshish, the Arab Physician" tells in his own way of the raising of Lazarus. The text of "Caliban upon Setebos" is, "Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself." The text of "Cleon" is, "As certain of your own poets have said." In "Fifine at the Fair" the Curé expounds the experience of Jacob and his stone-pillow with better insight than some better-known expositors show. In "Pippa Passes," when Bluphocks, the English vagabond, is intro-

duced, Browning seems to justify his appearance by the single foot-note: "He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust"; and Mr. Bluphocks shows himself amusingly familiar with Bible facts and phrases. Mr. Sludge, "the Medium," thinks the Bible says the stars are "set for signs when we should shear sheep, sow corn, prune trees," and describes the skeptic in the magic circle of spiritual "investigators" as the "guest without the wedding-garb, the doubting Thomas." Some one has taken the trouble to count five hundred Biblical phrases or allusions in "The Ring and the Book." Mrs. Browning's "'Drama of Exile" is the woman's side of the fall of Adam and Eve. Ruskin thought her "Aurora Leigh" the greatest poem the century had produced at that time. It abounds in Scriptural allusions. Browning came by all this naturally. Raised in the Church by a father who "delighted to surround him with books, notably old and rare Bibles," and a mother Carlyle called "a true type of a Scottish gentlewoman," with all the skill in the Bible that that implies, he never lost his sense of the majesty of the movement of Scripture ideas and phrases.

We need spend little time in discussing the influence of the English Bible on Thomas Car-

lyle. He does not often use the Scripture for his main theme; but he is constantly making Biblical allusions. On a railway journey when I was rereading Carlyle's *Historical Sketches*, I found a direct Biblical reference for every five pages, and almost numberless allusions beside.

The "Everlasting Yea," of which he says much, he gets, as you at once recognize, from the Scripture. His "Heroes and Hero Worship" is based on an idea of heroism which he learned from the Bible. He is an Old Testament prophet of present times; and, while he degenerated into a scold before he was through with it, he yet spoke with the thunderous voice of a true prophet, and much of the time in the language of the prophets. Some one said once that the only real reverence Carlyle ever had was for the person of Christ. Certainly there is no note of sneer, but of the profoundest regard for the teaching, the ideas and the history of the Scripture.

The name of Charles Dickens suggests a different atmosphere. He is a New Testament prophet. Where Carlyle has caught the spirit of rugged power in the Old Testament, Dickens has caught the sense of kindly love in the New Testament. Dickens's love for the child, the fact that he could draw children as he could draw

no one else and make them lovable, suggests the value to him of those frequent references which he makes to Christ setting a child in the midst of the disciples. It is notable, too, how often Dickens uses the great Scripture phrases for his most dramatic climaxes. There are not in literature many finer uses of Scripture than the scene in *Bleak House*, where the poor waif Joe is dying, and while his friend teaches him the Lord's Prayer he sees the light coming. A Christmas season without Dickens's *Christmas Carol* would be incomplete; but there again is the Scripture idea pressed forward.

George Eliot surely, if any writer, was under the spell of the Scripture. One of her critics calls her the historian of conscience. All of her heroes and heroines know the lash of the law. She knows very little about the New Testament, one would judge; but the one thing about which she has no doubt is certainly the reign of moral law. If a man will not yield to its power, it will break him. There is no such thing as breaking the moral law; there is nothing but being broken by it. Her characters are always quoting the Bible. They preach a great deal. She tells that she herself wrote Dinah Morris's sermon on the green with tears in her eyes. She meant it all. While her own religious faith was clouded,

her finest characters are never clouded in their religious faith, and she grounds their faith quite invariably on their early training in the Scripture. It is an interesting fact that George Eliot has no principal story which has not in it a church, and a priest or a preacher, with all that they involve.

Charles Kingsley is grouped hardly fairly in this list, because he was himself a preacher, and naturally all his work would feel the power of the Book, which he chiefly studied. Professor Masson says that "there is not one of his novels which has not the power of Christianity for its theme." No voice was raised more effectively for the beginning of the new social era in England than his. *Alton Locke* and *Yeast* are epoch-making books in the life of the common people of England. Even *Hypatia*, which is supposed to have been written to represent entirely pagan surroundings, is full of Bible phrases and ideas.

Lord Macaulay had been held up for many a day as one of the masters of style. Such great writing is not to be traced to any one influence. It could not have been easy to write as Macaulay wrote. Thackeray may have exaggerated in saying that Macaulay read twenty books to write a sentence, and traveled a hundred miles

to make a description; but all his writing shows the power of taking infinite pains. It becomes the more important, therefore, that Macaulay held the Bible in such estimate as he did. "In calling upon Lady Holland one day, Lord Macaulay was led to bring the attention of his fair hostess to the fact that the use of the word 'talent' to mean gifts or powers of the mind, as when we speak of men of talent, came from the use of the word in Christ's parable of the talents. In a letter to his sister Hannah he describes the incident, and says that Lady Holland was evidently ignorant of the parable. 'I did not tell her,' he adds, 'though I might have done so, that a person who professes to be a critic in the delicacies of the English language ought to have the Bible at his fingers' ends.'" That Macaulay practised his own preaching you would quickly find by referring to his essays. Take three sentences from the Essay on Milton: "The principles of liberty were the scoff of every growing courtier, and the Anathema Maranatha of every fawning dean. In every high place worship was paid to Charles and James, Belial and Moloch, and England propitiated these obscene and cruel idols with the blood of her best and brightest children. Crime succeeded to crime, and disgrace to disgrace, until the race,

accursed of God and man, was a second time driven forth to wander on the face of the earth and to be a by-word and a shaking of the head to the nations." In three sentences here are six allusions to Scripture. In that same essay, in the paragraphs on the Puritans, the allusions are a multitude. They are not even quoted. They are taken for granted. In his Essay on Machiavelli, though the subject does not suggest it, he falls into Scriptural phrases over and over. Listen to this, "A time was at hand when all the seven vials of the Apocalypse were to be poured forth and shaken out over those pleasant countries"; or this, "All the curses pronounced of old against Tyre seemed to have fallen on Venice. Her merchants already stood afar off lamenting for their great city"; or this, "In the energetic language of the prophet, Machiavelli was mad for the sight of his eyes which he saw."

And if Macaulay is baffling in the abundance of material, surely John Ruskin is worse. Carlyle's English style ran into excess of roughness; Macaulay's ran into excess of balance and delicacy. John Ruskin's continued to be the smoothest, easiest style in our English literature. He also was a Hebraic spirit, but of the gentler type. Mr. Chapman calls him the Elisha to Carlyle's

Elijah, a capital comparison.[1] Ruskin is one of the few writers who have told us what formed their style. In the first chapter of *Præterita* he pays tribute to his mother. He himself chose to read Walter Scott and Pope's Homer; but he says: "My mother forced me by steady daily toil to learn long chapters of the Bible by heart, as well as to read it, every syllable aloud, hard names and all, from Genesis to the Apocalypse about once a year; and to that discipline—patient, accurate, and resolute—I owe not only a knowledge of the Book which I find occasionally serviceable, but much of my general power of taking pains and the best part of my taste in literature." He thinks reading Scott might have led to other novels of a poorer sort. Reading Pope might have led to Johnson's or Gibbon's English; but "it was impossible to write entirely superficial and formal English" while he knew "by heart the thirty-second of Deuteronomy, the fifteenth of 1 Corinthians, the One hundred and nineteenth Psalm, or the Sermon on the Mount." In the second chapter of *Præterita* he is even more explicit. "I have next with deeper gratitude to chronicle what I owed to my mother for the resolute persistent lessons which so exercised me in

[1] *English Literature in Account with Religion.*

the Scripture, as to make every word of them familiar in my ear as habitual music, yet in that familiarity reverenced as transcending all thought and ordering all conduct." He tells how his mother drilled him. As soon as he could read she began a course of Bible work with him. They read alternate verses from the Genesis to the Revelation, names and all. Daily he had to commit verses of the Scripture. He hated the One hundred and nineteenth Psalm most; but he lived to cherish it most. In his old Bible he found the list of twenty-six chapters taught by his mother.

Not only was Ruskin well trained in the Bible, but he was a great teacher of it. In his preface to the *Crown of Wild Olives* he answers his critics by saying he has used the Book for some forty years. "My endeavor has been uniformly to make men read it more deeply than they do; trust it, not in their own favorite verses only, but in the sum of it all; treat it not as a fetish or a talisman which they are to be saved by daily repetition of, but as a Captain's order, to be held and obeyed at their peril." In the introduction to the *Seven Lamps of Architecture* he urges that we are in no danger of too much use of the Bible. "We use it most reverently when most habitually." Many of Ruskin's most striking titles

come straight out of the Scripture. *Crown of Wild Olives, Seven Lamps, Unto this Last*—all these are suggested by the Bible.

It is almost superfluous to speak of Robert Louis Stevenson. John Kelman has written a whole book on the religion of Stevenson, and it is available for all readers. He was raised by Cummy, his nurse, whose library was chiefly the Bible, the shorter catechism, and the *Life of Robert Murray McCheyne.* He said that the fifty-eighth chapter of Isaiah was his special chapter, because it so repudiated cant and demanded a self-denying beneficence. He loved Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress;* but "the Bible most stood him in hand." Every great story or essay shows its influence. He was not critical with it; he did not understand it; he did not interpret it fairly; but he felt it. His *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* is only his way of putting into modern speech Paul's old distinction between the two men who abide in each of us. They told him he ought not to work in Samoa, and he replied that he could not otherwise be true to the great Book by which he and all men who meant to do great work must live. Over the shoulder of our beloved Robert Louis Stevenson you can see the great characters of Scripture pressing him forward to his best work.

Not so much can be said of Swinburne. There was a strong infusion of acid in his nature, which no influence entirely destroyed. He is apt to live as a literary critic and essayist, though he supposed himself chiefly a poet. His own thought of poetry can be seen in his protest in behalf of Meredith. When he had been accused of writing on a subject on which he had no conviction to express ("Modern Love"), Swinburne denied that poets ought to preach anyway. "There are pulpits enough for all preachers of prose, and the business of verse writing is hardly to express convictions." Yet it is impossible to forget Milton and his purpose to "assert Eternal Providence, and justify the ways of God to men." Naturally, most poets do preach and preach well. Wordsworth declared he wanted to be considered a teacher or nothing. Mrs. Browning thought that poets were the only truth-tellers left to God. But Swinburne could not help a little preaching at any rate. His "Masque on Queen Bersaba" is an old miracle play of David and Nathan. His "Christmas Antiphones" are hardly Christian, though they are abundant in their allusions to Scripture. The first is a prayer for peace and rest in the coming of the new day of the birth of Christ. The second is a protest that neither God nor

man has befriended man as he should, and the third is an assurance that men will do for man even if God will not. Now, that is not Christian, but the Bible phrases are all through it. So when he writes his poem bemoaning Poland, he needs must head it "Rizpah." At the same time it must be said that Swinburne shows less of the influence of the Bible in his style and in his spirit than any other of our great English writers.

We come back again into the atmosphere of strong Bible influence when we name Alfred Tennyson. When Byron died, and the word came to his father's rectory at Somersby, young Alfred Tennyson felt that the sun had fallen from the heavens. He went out alone in the fields and carved in the sandstone, as though it were a monument: "Byron is dead." That was in the early stage of his poetical life. At first Carlyle could not abide Tennyson. He counted him only an echo of the past, with no sense for the future; but when he read Tennyson's "The Revenge," he exclaimed, "Eh, he's got the grip o' it"; and when Richard Monckton Milnes excused himself for not getting Tennyson a pension by saying his constituents had no use for poetry anyway, Carlyle said, "Richard Milnes, in the day of judgment when you are

asked why you did not get that pension, you may lay the blame on your constituents, but it will be you who will be damned!" Dr. Henry van Dyke studied Tennyson to best effect at just this point. In his chapter on "The Bible in Tennyson" are many such sayings as these: "It is safe to say that there is no other book which has had so great an influence upon the literature of the world as the Bible. We hear the echoes of its speech everywhere, and the music of its familiar phrases haunts all the field and grove of our fine literature. At least one cause of his popularity is that there is so much Bible in Tennyson. We cannot help seeing that the poet owes a large debt to the Christian Scriptures, not only for their formative influence on his mind and for the purely literary material in the way of illustrations and allusions which they have given him, but also for the creation of a moral atmosphere, a medium of thought and feeling in which he can speak freely and with an assurance of sympathy to a very wide circle of readers."

I need not stop to indicate the great poems in which Tennyson has so often used Scripture. The mind runs quickly to the little maid in "Guinevere," whose song, "Late, Late, so Late," is only a paraphrase of the parable of the fool-

ish virgins. "In Memoriam" came into the skeptical era of England, with its new challenge to faith, and stopped the drift of young men toward materialism. Recall the fine use he makes, in the heart of it, of the resurrection of Lazarus, and other Biblical scenes. Dr. van Dyke's "four hundred direct references to the Bible" do not exhaust the poems. No one can get Tennyson's style without the English Bible, and no one can read Tennyson intelligently without a fairly accurate knowledge of the Bible.

In this Victorian group the last name is Thackeray's. He is another whose mother trained him in the English Bible. The title of *Vanity Fair* is from *Pilgrim's Progress,* but the motto is from the Scripture; and he wrote his mother regarding the book: "What I want is to make a set of people living without God in the world (only that is a cant phrase.)" It is certain his mother did not count it a cant phrase, for he learned it from the Scripture. The subtitle of his *Adventures of Philip* says he is to show who robbed him, who helped him, and who passed him by. Thackeray got those expressions from the Bible. Somewhere very early in any of his works he reveals the influence of his childhood and manhood knowledge of the English Bible.

All this about the Victorian group is meant to be very familiar to any who are fresh from the reading of literature. They are great names, and they have differences as wide as the poles; but they have this in common, that they have drunk lightly or deeply from the same fountain; they have drawn from it ideas, allusions, literary style. Each of them has weakened as he has gotten farther from it, and loyalty to it has strengthened any one of them.

Turn now to the American group of writers. If we except theological writers with Jonathan Edwards, Horace Bushnell, Henry Ward Beecher, and their like, and political writers with Jefferson, Webster, and their like, the list need not be a long one. Only one writer in our narrower sense of literature must be named in the earlier day—Benjamin Franklin. In the period before the Civil War must be named Edgar Allan Poe (died 1849) and Washington Irving (died 1859). The Civil War group is the large one, and its names are those of the later group as well. Let them be alphabetical, for convenience: William Cullen Bryant, poet and critic; George William Curtis, essayist and editor; Emerson, our noblest name in the sphere of pure essay literature; Hawthorne, the novelist of conscience, as

Socrates was its philosopher; Oliver Wendell Holmes, whose "two chief hatreds were orthodoxy in religion and heterodoxy in medicine"; James Russell Lowell, essayist and poet, apt to live by his essays rather than by his poetry; Longfellow, whose "Psalm of Life" and "Hiawatha" have lived through as much parody and ridicule as any two bits of literature extant, and have lived because they are predestined to live; Thoreau, whose *Walden* may show, as Lowell said, how much can be done on little capital, but which has the real literary tang to it; and Whittier, whose poetry is sung the world around.

That makes only twelve names from Franklin to Whittier. Others could be included; but they are not so great as these. No one of these could be taken out of our literature without affecting it and, in some degree at least, changing the current of it. This is not to forget Bret Harte nor Samuel L. Clemens. But each is dependent for his survival on a taste for a certain kind of humor, not delicate like Irving's and Holmes's, but strong and sudden and a bit sharp. If we should forget the "Luck of Roaring Camp," "Truthful James," and the "Heathen Chinee," we would also forget Bret Harte. We are not apt to forget *Tom Sawyer*, nor perhaps

The Innocents Abroad, but we are forgetting much else of Mark Twain. Whitman is not named. His claims are familiar, but in spite of his admirers he seems so charged with a sensuous egotism that he is not apt to be a formative influence in literary history. It is still interesting, however, to remember how frequently he reveals his reading of Scripture.

Fortunately, all these writers are so near, and their work is so familiar, that details regarding them are not needed. Two or three general words can be said. In the first place, observe the high moral tone of all these first-grade writers, and, indeed, of the others who may be spoken of as in second rank. There is not a meretricious or humiliating book in the whole collection. There is not one book which has lived in American literature which has the tone of Fielding's *Tom Jones*. Whether it is that the Puritan strain continues in us or not, it is true that the American literary public has not taken happily to stories that would bring a blush in public reading. Professor Richardson, of Dartmouth, gives some clue to the reason of that. He says that "since 1870 or 1880 in America there has been a marked increase of strength of theistic and spiritual belief and argument among scientific men, students of philosophy,

religious 'radicals,' and others." He adds that while much contemporary American literature and thought is outside the accepted orthodox lines, yet "it is not hostile to Christianity; to the principles of its Founder it is for the most part sincerely attached. On the other hand, materialism has scarcely any hold upon it." Then follows a very notable sentence which is sustained by the facts: "Not an American book of the first class has ever been written by an atheist or denier of immortality." That sentence need not offend an admirer of Walt Whitman, for he "accepts both theism and the doctrine of the future life." American thought has remained loyal to the great Trinity, God, Freedom, and Immortality. So it comes about that while there are a number of these writers who could be put under the ban of the strongly orthodox in religion, every one of them shows the effect of early training in religion and in the Scripture.[1]

Another thing to be said is that America has a unique history among great nations in that it has never been affected by any great religious influence except that which has issued from the Scriptures. No religion has ever been influential

[1] This is fully worked out in Professor Richardson's *American Literature*, with ample illustration and argument.

in America except Christianity. For many years there have been sporadic and spasmodic efforts to extend the influence of Buddhism or other Indian cults. They have never been successful, because the American spirit is practical, and not meditative. We are not an introspective people. We do not look within ourselves for our religion. Whatever moral and religious influence our literature shows gets back first or last to our Scriptures. The point of view of nature that is taken by our writers like Bryant and Thoreau is that of the Nineteenth Psalm. Moreover, we have been strongly under the English influence. Irving insisted that we ought to be, that we were a young nation, that we ought frankly to follow the leadership of more experienced writers. Longfellow thought we had gone too far that way, and that our poets, at least, ought to be more independent, ought to write in the spirit of America and not of traditional poetry. Whether we ought to have yielded to it or not, it is true that English influence has told very strongly upon us, and the writers who have influenced our writers most have been those whom we have named as being themselves under the Bible influence.

We need not go into detail about these writers, though they are most attractive. Bryant did

for us what Wordsworth did for England. He made nature seem vocal. "Thanatopsis" is not a Christian poem in the narrow sense of the word, and yet it could hardly have been written except under Christian influence. His own genial, beautiful character was itself a tribute to Christian civilization, and his life, as critic and essayist, has left an impression which we shall not soon lose. Professor Richardson thinks that the three problematical characters in American literature are Emerson, Hawthorne, and Poe. The shrewdest estimate of Poe that has ever been given us is in Lowell's *Fable for Critics:*

"There comes Poe with his raven like Barnaby Rudge,
Three-fifths of him genius, and two-fifths sheer fudge,
Who has written some things quite the best of their kind,
But the heart somehow seems all squeezed out by the mind."

That says it exactly. Poe knew many horrible situations, but he did not know the way out; and of all our American writers laying claim to place in the first class Poe shows least influence of the Bible, and apparently needs it most.

Irving was the first American writer who stood high enough to be seen across the water.

Thackeray's most beautiful essay is on Irving and Macaulay, who died just one month apart. In it he describes Irving as the best intermediary between the nations, telling us Americans that the English are still human, and assuring the English that Americans are already human. Irving was trained early and thoroughly in the Bible. All his life he was an old-fashioned Episcopalian with no concern for new religious ideas and with no rough edges anywhere. Charles Dudley Warner, speaking of Irving's moral quality, says: "I cannot bring myself to exclude it from a literary estimate, even in the face of the current gospel of art for art's sake." [1] Like Scott, he "recognized the abiding value in literature of integrity, sincerity, purity, charity, faith. These are beneficences, and Irving's literature, walk around it and measure it by whatever critical instruments you will, is a beneficent literature."

Then there is Emerson, a son of the manse and once a minister himself. He was, therefore, perfectly familiar with the English Bible. He did not accept it in all its religious teaching. Indeed, we have never had a more marked individualist in our American public life than Emerson. At every point he was simply him-

[1] *American Men of Letters Series, Washington Irving,* p. 302.

self. There is very little quotation in his writing, very little visible influence of any one else. He was not a follower of Carlyle, though he was his friend. If there is any precedent for the construction of his sentences, and even of his essays, it is to be found in the Hebrew prophets. As some one puts it, "he uttered sayings." In many of his essays there is no particular reason why the paragraphs should run one, two, three, and not three, two, one, or two, one, three, or in any other order. But Mr. Emerson was just himself. It is yet true that "his value for the world at large lies in the fact that after all he is incurably religious." It is true that he could not see any importance in forms, or in ordinary declarations of faith. "He would fight no battle for prelacy, nor for the Westminster confession, nor for the Trinity, but as against atheism, pessimism, and materialism, he was an ally of Christianity." The influence of the Bible on Emerson is more marked in his spirit than in anything else. Once in a while, as in that familiar address at Concord (1873), you run across Scripture phrases: "Shall not they who receive the largest streams spread abroad the healing waters?" That figure appears in literature only in the Bible, and there are others like it in his writings.

As for Longfellow, he is shot through with Scripture. No man who did not know Scripture in more than a passing way could have written such a sentence as this: "There are times when the grasshopper is a burden, and thirsty with the heat of labor the spirit longs for the waters of Shiloah, that go softly." There are two strikingly beautiful expressions from Scripture. Take another familiar saying in the same essay when he says the prospect for poetry is brightening, since but a short time ago not a poet "moved the wing or opened the mouth or peeped." He did not run across that in general current writing. He got that directly from the Bible. In his poems is an amazing amount of reference to the Bible. One would expect much in the "Courtship of Miles Standish," for that is a story of the Puritans, and they spoke, naturally, in terms of the Bible; yet, of course, they could not do it in Longfellow's poem, if Longfellow did not know the language of the Bible very well. One might not expect to find it so much in "Evangeline," but it is there from beginning to end. In "Acadia," the cock crowed

"With the self-same
Voice that in ages of old had startled the penitent Peter."

And,

"Wild with the winds of September,
Wrestled the trees of the forest, as Jacob of old with the angel."

Evangeline saw the moon pass

"Forth from the folds of the cloud, and one star followed her footsteps,
As out of Abraham's tent young Ishmael
Wandered with Hagar."

There is a great deal of that sort of thing in his writing. He has done for many what he did for Lowell one day. Discouraged in settling the form of a new edition of his own poems, Lowell took up a volume of Longfellow just to see the type, and presently found that he had been reading two hours. He wrote Longfellow he could understand his popularity, saying: "You sang me out of all my worries." That is a great thing to do, and Longfellow learned from the Scripture how to do that in the "Psalm of Life" and all his other poems.

We need only a word about Lowell himself. He was the son of a minister, and so knew the Bible from his infancy. He belonged to the Brahman caste himself, but a good deal of the ruggedness of the Old Testament got into his writing. It is in "The Vision of Sir Launfal."

It is in his plea for international copyright where the familiar lines occur:

> "In vain we call old notions fudge,
> And bend our conscience to our dealing,
> The Ten Commandments will not budge,
> And stealing will continue stealing."

There is hint of it in his quizzical lines about himself in the *Fable for Critics*. He says that he is in danger of rattling away

> "Until he is as old as Methusalem,
> At the head of the march to the last New Jerusalem."

Whittier needs no words of ours. His hymns are part of our religious equipment. "Snow-bound" and all the rest of the beautiful, quiet, Quaker-like writing of this beloved poet are among our national assets. We join in his sorrow as he writes the doom of Webster and his fame, and we do not wonder that he chose for it the Scriptural title "Ichabod."

Whatever is to be said about an individual here or there, it is true that great American literature shows the influence of the Bible. Like everything else in America, it has been founded on a religious purpose. Writers in all lines have been trained in the Bible. If they feel any religious influence at all, it is the Bible influence.

This has been a long journey from Shakespeare to Whittier, and it leaves untouched the great field of present-day writers. Let the unstarred names wait their time. Among them are many who can say in their way what Hall Caine has said of himself: "I think I know my Bible as few literary men know it. There is no book in the world like it, and the finest novels ever written fall far short in interest of any one of the stories it tells. Whatever strong situations I have in my books are not of my creation, but are taken from the Bible. *The Deemster* is a story of the Prodigal Son. *The Bondman* is the story of Esau and Jacob. *The Scapegoat* is the story of Eli and his sons, but with Samuel as a little girl; and *The Manxman* is the story of David and Uriah." Take up any of the novels of the day, even the poorer ones, but notably the better ones, and see how uniformly they show the Scriptural influence in material, in idea, and in spirit. What the literature of the future will be no one can say. This much is as sure as any fact in literary history, that the English Bible is part of the very fiber of great literature from the day it first appeared in our tongue to this hour.

LECTURE V

THE KING JAMES VERSION—ITS INFLUENCE ON ENGLISH AND AMERICAN HISTORY

THE King James version of the Bible is only a book. What can a book do in history? Well, whatever the reason, books have played a large part in the movements of men, specially of modern men.

They have markedly influenced the opinion of men about the past. It is commonly said that Hume's *History of England*, defective as it is, has yet "by its method revolutionized the writing of history," and that is true. Nearer our own time, Carlyle's *Life of Cromwell* reversed the judgment of history on Cromwell, gave all readers of history a new conception of him and his times and of the movement of which he was the life. After the Restoration none were so poor as to do Cromwell reverence until Carlyle's *book* gave him anew to the world.

There are instances squarely in our own time by which their mighty influence may be tested.

They are of books of almost ephemeral value save for the student of history. As literature they will be quickly forgotten; but as *forces* they must be reckoned with. There is *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. It would be absurd to say that it brought the American Civil War, or freed the negroes, or saved the Union. It did none of those great things. Yet it is not at all absurd to name it among the potent powers in all three. It is not to our purpose whether it is true or not as a statement of the whole fact. Doubtless it was not true of the general and common circumstances of Southern slavery; but everything in it was possible, and even frequent enough so that it could not be questioned. It pretended no more. But its influence was simply tremendous. In book form it became available in 1852, and within three years, 1855, it was common property of English-speaking people. No other book ever produced so extraordinary an effect so quickly in the public mind.[1] It held up slavery to judgment. It crystallized the thoughts of common people. The work of those strenuous years in the '60's could not have been done without the result of that book. It made history. Come nearer our own day. We could not be long in London without feeling

[1] Rhodes, *History of the United States*, vol. i, pp. 185–303.

the concern of the better people for conditions in the East End. A new social impulse has seized them. To be sure, it lacks much yet of success; but more has been done than most people realize. The new movement, the awakening of that social sense, traces back to the book of Gen. William Booth, *In Darkest England* (1890). It has helped to change the life of a large part of London.

On this side, the new concern for city conditions dates from the book of a newspaper reporter, Jacob A. Riis, *How the Other Half Lives*. It thrust the Other Half into such prominence that it has never been possible to forget it. Marked advance in all American cities, in legislation and life, goes straight back to it. Name one other book still in the field of social service, even so unpleasant, so terrible, so obnoxious a book as Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle*. It started and sustained movements which have unsettled business and political life ever since it appeared. It made some conditions vivid, unescapable.

Do not misunderstand the argument. No man can tell what will be said in the histories a century from now about these lesser books. We can never go beyond guesses as to the whole cause of any chain of events.[1] As time passes,

[1] MacPhail, *Essays on Puritanism*, p. 278.

incidental elements in the causes gradually sink out of sight and a few great forces take the whole horizon. Whatever the histories a century from now say about the relative place of such books as we have named, it is certain that they have influenced the movements mightily. The literary histories will say nothing at all about them. They are not great literature, but they were born of a passion of the times and voiced and aroused it anew.

When, therefore, it is urged that the English Bible has influenced history, it is not making an undue claim for it. When it is further urged that of all books in English literature it has been most influential, it has most made history, it has most determined great movements, the argument only claims for it the highest place among books.

And it would not be surprising if it should have such influence. It is the one great piece of English literature which is universal property. Since the day it was published it has been kept available for everybody. No other book has ever had its chance. English-speaking people have always been essentially religious. They have always had a profound regard for the terms, the institutions, the purposes of religion. Partly that has been maintained by the Bible; but the

Bible in its turn has been maintained by it. So it has come about that English-speaking people, though they have many books, are essentially people of one Book. Wherever they are, the Bible is. Queen Victoria has it near by when the messenger from the Orient appears, and lays her hand upon it to say that this is the foundation of the prosperity of England. But the poor housewife in the cottage, with only a crust for food, stays her soul with it. The Puritan creeps into hiding with the Book, while his brother sails away to the new land with the Book. The settler may have his Shakespeare; he will surely have his Bible. As the long wagon-train creeps across the plain to seek the Western shore, there may be no other book in all the train; but the Bible will be there. Find any settlement of men who speak the English tongue, wherever they make their home, and the Bible is among them. When did any book have such a chance to influence men? It is the one undisturbed heritage of all who speak the English tongue. It binds the daughter and the mother country together, and gathers into the same bond the scattered remnants of the English-speaking race the world around. Its language is the one speech they all understand. Strange it would be if it had not a profound influence upon history!

Another fact that has helped to give the Bible its great influence is the power of the preaching it has inspired. The periods of greatest preaching have always been the periods of freest access to the Bible. No one can overlook the immense power of the sermons of history. There have been poor, inept, banal expositors, doubtless; but even they turned men's minds to the Bible. Reading the Bible makes men thinkers, and so makes preachers inevitably. Witness the Scotch. James was raised in Scotland and believed in the power of preaching. At one time he wanted to settle endowments for the maintenance of preaching under government control. But Archbishop Whitgift convinced him that much preaching was "an innovation and dangerous," since it is quite impossible to control a man's mouth once it is given a public chance. Under Charles I. the sermon was mighty in the service of the Puritans until it was suppressed or restricted. Then men became lecturers and expounded the Bible or taught religious truth in public or private. Rich men engaged private chaplains since public meetings could not be held. Somehow they taught the Bible still. Archbishop Laud forbade both. Yet the leaven worked the more for its restriction. At least one good cook I know says that if you want your dough to rise

and the yeast to work, you must cover it. Laud did not want it to rise, but he made the mistake of covering it.

There has never been a book which has provoked such incessant preaching and discussion as has the Bible. The believers in the Koran teach it as it is, word for word. Believers in the Bible have never stopped with that. They have always tried to come together and hear it expounded. Such gatherings and such constant pressure of the Book on groups of hearers would inevitably give the Bible great influence. When it is remembered that in America alone there are each week approximately four hundred thousand gatherings of people which have for their avowed purpose instruction or inspiration in religion, and that the instruction and inspiration are professedly and openly drawn from the Bible, that more than three hundred thousand sermons are preached every week from it and passages of it read in all the gatherings, it appears that the Bible had and still has such a chance to influence life as no other book has had. President Schurman traces a large part of our own stronger American life to the educative power of our Sundays. But central in the education of those days is now, and has been from the first of our national history, the English Bible.

The influence of the Bible comes also from the fact that it makes its chief appeal to the deeper elements in life. "Human history in its real character is not an account of kings and of wars; it is the unfolding of the moral, the political, the artistic, the social, and the spiritual progress of the human family. The time will yet come when the names of dynasties and of battles shall not form the titles of its chapters. The truths revealed in the Bible have been the touchstone which has tried men's spirits."[1]

Those words go to the heart of the fact. The influence of the English Bible on English-speaking history for the last three hundred years is only the influence of its fundamental truths. It has moved with tremendous impact on the wills of men. It has made the great human ideals clear and definite; it has made them beautiful and attractive; but that has not been enough. It has reached also the springs of action. It has given men a sense of need and also a sense of strength, a sense of outrage and a sense of power to correct the wrong. There it has differed from most books. Frederick Robertson said that he read only books with iron in them, and, as he read, their atoms of iron entered the blood, and it ran more red for them.

[1] H. B. Smith, *Faith and Philosophy*, p. 54.

There is iron in this Book, and it has entered the blood of the human race. Where it has entered most freely, the red has deepened; and nowhere has it deepened more than in our English-speaking races. The iron of our blood is from this King James version.

Bismarck explained the victories of the Germans over the French by the fact that from childhood the Germans had been trained in the sense of duty, as the French had not been trained, and as soldiers had learned to feel that nothing could escape the Eye which ever watched their course. They learned that, Bismarck said, from the religion which they had been taught. There is no mistaking the power of religion in rousing and sharpening the sense of duty. Webster spoke for the English-speaking races, and found his phrases in the Bible, when he said that this sense "pursues us ever. It is omnipresent like the Deity. If we take to ourselves the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, duty performed or duty violated is still with us for our happiness or our misery. If we say the darkness shall cover us, in the darkness as in the light our obligations are yet with us. We cannot escape from their power or fly from their presence." It is religion which makes that sense of duty keen; and, whatever

religion has done among English-speaking races, the English Bible has done, for it has been the text-book and the final authority of those races in the moving things of their faith.

It would be easiest in making the argument to single out here and there the striking events in which the Bible has figured and let them stand for the whole. There are many such events, and they are attractive.

We can imagine ourselves standing on the shore at Dover in 1660, fifty years after the version was issued, waiting with the crowd to see the banished King return. The civil war is over, the protectorate under Cromwell is past. Charles II., thick-lipped, sensuous, "seeming to belong rather to southern Europe than to Puritan England," is about to land from France, whence the people, wearied with Puritan excesses, have called him back. There is a great crowd, but they do not cheer wildly. There is something serious on hand. They mean to welcome the King; but it is on condition. Their first act is when the Mayor of Dover places in his hands a copy of the English Bible, which the King declares he loves above all things in the world. It proves only a sorry jest; but the English people think it is meant for truth, and they go to their homes rejoicing. They rejoiced too soon, for this is

that utterly faithless king for whom his witty courtier proposed an epitaph:

"Here lies our sovereign lord, the king,
Whose word no man relies on;
Who never said a foolish thing,
And never did a wise one." [1]

As at other times, the King was only talking with no meaning; but the people did not know him yet. They had made their Bible the great test of their liberties: will a king stand by that or will he not? If he will not, let him remember Charles the First! And from that day no English king, no American leader, has ever successfully restricted English-speaking people from free access to their great Book. It has become a banner of their liberties. The child was wiser than he knew when he was asked what lesson we may learn from Charles I., and replied that we may learn that a man should not lose his head in times of excitement. Charles lost his head long before he laid it on the block.

Besides the scene at Dover, we may watch that great emigration of the Scotch-Irish from Ulster, beginning in 1689, seventy years after the Puritan exodus and eighty years after the

[1] White, in his *History of England*, says that Charles replied that the explanation was easy: His discourses were his own, his actions were his ministry's!

version was issued, which peopled the backwoods of America with a choice, strong population. They were only following the right to worship freely, the right to their Bible without chains on its lids or on the lips of its preachers. They were making no protest against Romanism nor against Anglicanism in themselves. They only claimed the right to worship as they would. Under William and Mary, after James II. had fled to France, toleration became the law in England; but when Ireland was reconquered by William's generals, the act of toleration was not extended to it. Baptists, Presbyterians, all except the small Anglican Church, were put under the ban and forbidden to worship. But the Bible had made submission impossible, and there came about that great exodus to the new land which has so blessed it.

There are other signal events which might be observed. But all the while there would be danger of magnifying the importance of events which seem to prove the point. The view needs to be a more general one instead. The period is not long—three hundred years at the most—though it has a background of all English history. We have already seen how from the first there have been determined efforts to make the Bible common to the people; yet, of course, the

influence of our version can appear only in these three hundred years since it was issued. That short period has not only been interesting almost to the point of excitement in English life, but it covers virtually all American life. Take, therefore, the broader view of the influence of the English Bible on history, apart from these striking events.

It is to be assumed at once that much of its influence is indirect. Indeed, its chief influence must be through men who prove to be leaders and through that public sentiment without which leaders are powerless. If leaders live by it and stand or fall by its teaching, then their work is its work. If they find a public sentiment issuing from it which gives them power, a sentiment which crystallizes around them when they appear, because it is of kindred spirit with themselves, then the power of that sentiment is the power of the Bible. The influence of *Pilgrim's Progress* or *The Saint's Rest* is the influence of Bunyan and Baxter; but back of them is the Bible. In language, in idea, in spirit, they were only making the Bible a common Book to their readers. Their value for life and history is the Bible's value for life and history.

The power of great souls is frequently and easily underestimated. Scientific study has

tended to that by magnifying visible conditions and by trying to calculate the force of laws which are in plain sight. Buckle's theory of civilization has influenced our times greatly. It explains national character as the outcome of natural conditions, and lays such stress on circumstances as left it possible for Buckle to declare that history and biography are in different spheres. It is still true, however, that most history turns on biography. Great souls have been the chief factors in great movements. Whether the movement could have occurred without them will never be possible to decide, if it should be disputed. In a chemical laboratory the essential factors of any phenomenon can be determined by the process of elimination. All the elements which preceded it except one can be introduced; if the result is the same as in its presence, manifestly it is not essential. So the experiment can go on until the result becomes different, when it is evident that the last omitted element is an essential one. But no such process is possible in great historical movements. The only course open to us is to consider carefully the elements which do appear.

Take three great movements which are easiest to follow in these three centuries. Whether the spiritual independence of England would have

been secured without the Quakers may be debated; but this fact can hardly be debated: certainly it was not so secured; whether or not the Quakers could have been without George Fox, certainly they did not occur without him. Take the second: whether or not some other movement could have done what Puritanism did is hardly a question for history; Puritanism actually did the work for England and America which gave both their strongest qualities. There is no testing the period to see whether Puritanism could be left out. There it stands as a powerful factor, and no analysis of the history can possibly omit it. Or the third: it is not a question for a historian whether English history could have been the same without Methodism and whether Methodism could have been at all without the Wesleys; certainly nothing took its place, nor did any one else stand at the head of the movement.

Here are these three great movements, not to seek others. All of them have had tremendous influence in the religious and political history of both the nations where they have moved most freely. Each of them is a direct and undisputed result of the influence of the Bible. Much has already been said of the Puritans in England, and there will be occasion to see what

was their influence in America. But think for a moment of the Quakers. James Freeman Clark calls them the English mystics; certainly they were more than that.[1] George Fox had little learning but the Bible; that he knew well. He first came to himself out in the fields alone with the Bible. He was not stirred to the origin of the movement nor to his greatest activity by experiences he had in public places. He came to those public places profoundly affected by his familiarity with the English Bible. He came at a time when his protest was needed, a protest against formalism, against mere outward conformity. A thousand years before, Mohammedanism had really saved the Christian faith by its protest, violent and merciless, against its errors, challenging it to purity in faith and life. Now Fox and the Quakers saved church life by protest against church life. The Bible was still the law, but not the Bible which you read for me, but that which you read for you and I for me, each of us guided by an inner light. The Quaker movement was a distinct protest against church formalism in the interests of freedom of the Bible.

That Quaker influence was far stronger in America than it ever proved to be in England.

[1] David Gregg, *The Quakers in America.*

George Fox himself visited the colonies and extended its influence. Three great effects are easily traceable. The very presence of the Quakers in the New England colonies, notably in Massachusetts, and the persecutions which they endured, did more to purify the Puritans than any other one influence. One is only loyal to the Puritan character and teaching in declaring that in the manner of the Puritans toward the Quakers they were wrong; they were wrong because they were untrue to their own belief, untrue to their own Bibles, and when the more thoughtful among them found that they were taking the attitude toward the Quakers which they had resented toward themselves, remembering that the Quakers were drawing their teaching from the same Bible as themselves, they were naturally checked. And, while the Quakers in New England suffered greatly, their suffering proved the purification of the Puritans. It accented and so it removed the narrowness of Puritan practice. Further, the Quaker movement gave to American history William Penn and the whole constitution of Pennsylvania. It was there that a state first lived by the principle which William Penn pronounced: "Any government is free where the people are a party to the laws enacted." So it came about that Inde-

pendence Hall is on Quaker soil. The Declaration of Independence appeared there, and not on Puritan soil. It may be there was more freedom of thought in Pennsylvania. It may be explained on purely geographical ground, Philadelphia being the most convenient center for the colonies. But it remains significant that not on Cavalier soil in Virginia, not on Dutch soil in New York, not on Puritan soil in Boston, but on Quaker soil in Philadelphia the movement for national independence crystallized around a general principle that "any government is free where the people are a party to the laws enacted," but that no government is free whose people have not a voice. That is not minimizing the power of Puritanism, nor forgetting Fanueil Hall and the Tea Party. It only accents what should be familiar: that Puritanism drew into itself more of the fighting element of Scripture, while the Quaker movement drew into itself more of the uniting, pacifying element of Scripture. The third effect of the Quaker movement is John Greenleaf Whittier, with his gentle but never weak demand that national freedom should not mean independence of other people alone, but the independence of all people within the nation. So that while the Quaker spirit helped the colonies to break loose from

foreign control and become a nation, it helped the nation in turn to break loose from internal shackles. The nation stood free within itself as well as free from others. Yet the Quaker movement—and this is the argument—is itself the result of the English Bible, and the Quaker influence is the influence of the English Bible on history.

There is not need for extended word about the great Wesleyan movement in the midst of this period, which has so profoundly affected both English and American history. It has not worked out into such visible political forms. But any movement that makes for larger spiritual life makes for the strengthening of the entire life of the nation. The mere figures of the early Wesleyan movement are almost appalling. Here was a man, John Wesley, an Oxford scholar, who spent nearly fifty years traveling up and down and back and forth through England on horseback, covering more than two hundred and fifty thousand miles, preaching everywhere more than forty thousand times, writing, translating, editing two hundred works. When death ended his busy life there were in his newly formed brotherhood one hundred and thirty-five thousand members, with five hundred and fifty itinerants who were following his example with

incessant preaching and Bible exposition. It was the old Wiclif-Lollard movement over again. And here was the other Wesley, Charles, teaching England to sing again, teaching the old truths of the Bible in rhyme to many who could not read, so that they became familiar, writing on horseback, in stage-coaches, everywhere, writing with one passion, to help England back to the Bible and its truth. Such activity could not leave the nation unmoved; all its religious life felt it, and its political life from serf to king was deeply affected by it. It is a common saying that the Wesleyan movement saved English liberty from European entanglement. Yet the Wesleyan movement issued from the Bible and led England back to the Bible.

But apart from these wide movements and the great souls who led them, there is time for thought of one typical character on each side of the sea who did not so much make a movement as he proved the point around which a great fluid idea crystallized into strength. Across the sea the character shall be that man whom Carlyle gave back to us out of obloquy and misunderstanding, Oliver Cromwell. Choosing him, we pass other names which crowd into memory, names of men who have served the need of England well—Wilberforce, John Howard, Shaftes-

bury, Gladstone—who drew their strength from this Book. Yet we choose Cromwell now for argument. On this side it must be that best known, most beloved, most typical of all Americans, Abraham Lincoln.

An English historian has said that the most influential, the most unescapable years in English history are those of the Protectorate. That is a strong saying. They were brief years. There were many factors in them. Oliver Cromwell was only one, but he was chief of all. He was not chief in the councils which resulted in the beheading of Charles I. on that 30th of January, 1649, though he took part in them. Increasingly in the movements which led to that event and which followed it he was growing into prominence. After Marston Moor, Prince Rupert named him Ironsides, and his regiment of picked men, picked for their spirit, went always into battle singing psalms, "and were never beaten." As he rode out to the field at Naseby (1645) he knew he faced the flower of the loyalist army, while with him were only untrained men; yet he smiled, as he said afterward, in the "assurance that God would, by things that are not, bring to naught things that are." Then he adds, "God did it." Never did he raise his flag but in the interests of the

liberty of the people, and back of every movement of his army there was his confidence in the Bible, which was his mainstay. They offered him the throne; he would not have it. He dissolved the Parliament which had dragged on until the patience of the people was exhausted. He called another to serve their need. The evening before it met he spent in meditation on the One hundred and third Psalm. The evening before the second Parliament of his Protectorate he brooded on the Eighty-fifth Psalm, and opened the Parliament next day with an exposition of it. The man was saturated with Scripture. Yes, the times were rude. It was an Old Testament age, and in right Old Testament spirit did Cromwell work. And it seemed that his work failed. There was no one to succeed him, and soon after his death came the Restoration and the return of Charles II., of which we have already spoken, in which occurred that hint of the real sentiment of the English people which a wise man had better have taken. Yet, recall what actually happened. Misunderstanding the spirit of the English people, which Cromwell had helped to form, but which in turn had made Cromwell possible, the servile courtiers of the false king unearthed the Protector's body, three years buried, hanged it on

a gallows in Tyburn for a day, beheaded it, and threw the trunk into a pit. His head they mockingly set on a pinnacle of the Parliament Hall, whence for some weeks it looked over the city which he had served. Then, during a great storm, it came clattering down, only a poor dried skull, and disappeared no one knows where. But when you stand opposite the great Parliament buildings in London to-day, the most beautiful buildings for their purpose in the world, the buildings where the liberties of the English express themselves year after year, whose is the one statue that finds place within the inclosure, near the spot where that poor skull came rattling down? Not Charles II.—you shall look in vain for him. Not George Monk, who brought back the King—you shall not find him there. The one statue which England has cared to plant beside its Parliament buildings is that of Oliver Cromwell, its Lord Protector. There he stands, warning kings in the interests of liberty. John Morley makes no ideal of him. He thinks he rather closed the medieval period than opened the modern period; but he will not have Cromwell compared to Frederick the Great, who spoke with a sneer of mankind. Cromwell "belonged to the rarer and nobler type of governing men, who see the golden side, who count faith,

piety, hope among the counsels of practical wisdom, and who for political power must ever seek a moral base." That is a rare and noble type of men, whether they govern or not. But no man of that type governs without red blood in his veins; and the iron that made this man's blood run red came from the English Bible.

It is a far cry from Oliver Cromwell to Abraham Lincoln—far in years, far in deeds, far in methods, but not far in spirit. Great men are kindred, generations over. We pass from the Old Testament into the New when we pass from Cromwell to Lincoln; but we still feel the spirit of liberty. From the days of the Puritans, the Quakers and the Dutch, history had been preparing for this time. Benjamin Franklin had done his great work for human liberty; he had summed up his hope for the nation in his memorable address in 1787, when he stood eighty-one years old, before the convention assembled to frame a constitution for the new government. He reminded them that at the beginning of the contest with the British they had had daily prayers in that room in Philadelphia for the Divine protection, and said: "I have lived for a long time, and the longer I live the more convincing proof I see of this truth, that God governs in the affairs of men. And if a sparrow cannot fall

to the ground without His notice, is it probable that an empire can rise without His aid? We have been assured, Sir, in the sacred writings, that 'Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it.' I firmly believe this, and I also believe that without His concurring aid we shall proceed in this political building no better than the builders of Babel. I therefore beg leave to move that, henceforth, prayers imploring the assistance of Heaven and its blessing on our deliberation be held in this assembly every morning before we proceed to business, and that one or more of the clergy of this city be requested to officiate in that service."

George Washington sounded a familiar note in his farewell address: "Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports. A volume could not trace all their connection with private and public felicity. Let us with caution indulge the supposition that morality can be maintained without religion. Whatever may be conceded to the influence of refined education on minds of peculiar structure, reason and experience both forbid us to expect that national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principles." Thomas Jefferson, of whom it is sometimes said that he was indifferent to re-

ligion, had yet done his great work under inspiration, which he himself acknowledges in his inaugural address, when he speaks of the nation as "enlightened by a benign religion, professed indeed, and practised in various forms, yet all of them inculcating honesty, truth, temperance, gratitude, and the love of man; acknowledging and adoring an overruling Providence, which by all its dispensation proves that it results in the happiness of man here and his greater happiness hereafter." Greater than Jefferson had appeared John Marshall, greatest of our Chief Justices, like in spirit to that John Marshall Harlan, whose death marked the year which has just closed, of whom his colleagues said that he went to his rest each night with one hand on the Bible and the other on the Constitution of the United States, a description which could almost be transferred to his great predecessor in that court. Moreover, when Lincoln came, Joseph Story, the greatest teacher of law which our country had produced, had only just died from his place on the Supreme Bench. In his Phi Beta Kappa address at Harvard (1826), in a brilliant and masterful analysis of "The Characteristics of the Age," he had paid tribute after tribute to the power of religion and the Bible. He had declared his belief that the religion of

the Bible had "established itself in the hearts of men by all which genius could bring to illumine or eloquence to grace its sublime truths." Of the same period with Lincoln was also Webster, who was called the "concordance of the House." Many of his stately periods and great ideas came from the Bible. Indeed, there is no oratory of our history, which has survived the waste of the years, which does not feel and show the power of the Scriptures. The English Bible has given our finest eloquence its ideas, its ideals, its illustrations, its phrases.

The line is unbroken. And it leads to this tall figure, crowned with a noble head, his face the saddest in American history, who knew Gethsemane in all its paths. The heart of the American people has always been touched by his early years of abject poverty. But there were compensations. He had few books, and they entered his blood and fiber. In his earliest formative years there were six books which he read and re-read. Nicolay and Hay name the Bible first in the list, with *Pilgrim's Progress* as the fourth. Mr. Morse calls it a small library, but nourishing, and says that Lincoln absorbed into his own nature all the strong juice of the books.[1] How much he drew from the pages of the Holy Book

[1] *American Statesman Series, Abraham Lincoln*, i, 12, 13.

let any reader of his speeches say. Quotation, reference, illustration crowd each other. The phrases are familiar. The man is full of the Book. And what the man does is part of the work of the Book.

One of his biographers says that there is nothing in the life or work of Lincoln which cannot be explained without reference to any supernatural influence or power. That depends on what is meant by supernatural. There were no miracles, no astounding visions nor experiences. But there ran into Lincoln's life from his young manhood onward this steady and strong current of ideas and ideals from the Bible. In his second inaugural address he worded the thought that was the deepest horror of the Civil War—that on both sides of the strife men were reading the same Bible, praying to the same God, and invoking His aid against each other! In that very brief inaugural Mr. Lincoln quotes in full three Bible verses, and makes reference to two others, and the whole address lasted barely four minutes. There could be no mistaking the solemn importance of the fact to which he referred in the inaugural, the presence on the other side of men who held their Bibles high in regard. "Stonewall" Jackson was devout beyond most men. The two books always at his hand were his

Bible and the *Manual of the Rules of War*. Robert E. Lee was a cultured, Christian gentleman, as were many others with him, while throughout the South were multitudes who loved and reverenced the Bible as fully as could any in the North. As we look back over half a century, this comes out plainly: that so far as the American civil war was a strife about union pure and simple, having one nation or two here in our part of the continent, it was matter of judgment, not of religion. There grew around that question certain others of national honor and obligation, which were not so clear then as now. But men on opposite sides of the question might read the same Bible without finding authoritative word about it. In so far, however, as the war had at its heart the matter of human slavery, it was possible for men to differ only when one side read the letter of the Bible while the other read its manifest spirit. Written in times when slavery was counted matter of course, its letter dealt with slavery as a fact. It could be read as though it approved slavery. But long before this day men had found its true spirit. England had abolished slavery (1808) under the insistence that it was foreign to all right understanding of God's Word. Lincoln knew its letter well; he cared for its spirit more, and he found

his strength not in the familiar saying that God was on his side, but in the more forceful one that he believed himself to be on God's side. So he became a point around which the great fluid idea crystallized into strength—a point made and sustained by the influence of the Bible, which he knew only in the King James version.

We have spoken of some wide movements and of men around whom they crystallized, finding in them the influence of the Bible. It will be well to note two outstanding traits of the Bible which in English or any other tongue would inevitably tend to strong and favorable influence on the history of men. Those two traits are, first, its essential democracy, and, secondly, its persistent moral appeal.

Here must be recalled that century before the King James version, when by slow filtration the fundamental ideas of the Bible were entering English life. Surely it is beyond words that the Bible made Puritanism, though it was in strong swing when James came to the throne. Now John Richard Green is well within the fact when he says that "Puritanism may fairly claim to be the first political system which recognized the grandeur of the people as a whole." [1] It was

[1] *Short History of the English People*, chap. vii, sec. vii.

the magnifying of the people as a whole over against some people as having peculiar rights which marked Puritanism, and which is democracy. Shakespeare knew nothing of it, and had no influence on the movement for larger democracy. After we have said our strong word of Shakespeare's powerful influence upon literature it yet must be said that it is difficult to lay finger on one single historical movement except the literary one which Shakespeare even remotely influenced. The Bible, meanwhile, was absolutely creating this movement. Under its influence "the meanest peasant felt himself ennobled as the child of God, the proudest noble recognized a spiritual equality with the meanest saint." That was the inevitable result of a fresh reading of the Bible in every home. It assured each man that he is a son of God, equal in that sonship with all other men. It assured him no man has right to lord it over others, as though his relation to God were peculiar. The Bible constantly impresses men that this relation to God is the essential one. Everything else is incidental. Granted now a people freshly under the influence of that teaching, you have a large explanation of the movement which followed the issuance of this version.

James opened his first parliament (1604) with

a speech claiming divine right, a doctrine which had really been raised to meet the claim of the right of the pope to depose kings. James argued that the state of monarchy is the supremest thing on earth, for kings are not only God's lieutenants on earth and set upon God's throne, but even by God Himself are called gods. (He never found that in the Genevan version or its notes!) As to dispute what God may do is blasphemy, so it is sedition in subjects to dispute what the king may do in the height of his power. "I will not be content that my power be disputed on." The House of Commons sat by his grace and not of any right.

Set that idea of James over against the idea which the Bible was constantly developing in the mind of the people, and you see why Trevelyan says that the Bible brought in democracy, and why he thinks, as we have already seen, that the greatest contribution England has made to government is its treatment of the Stuarts, when it transferred sovereignty from the king to Parliament. Among the men who listened to that kind of teaching were Eliot, Hampden, Pym, all Puritans under the spell of the Bible. But the strife grew larger than a merely Puritan one. The people themselves were strongly feeling their rights. "To the devout Englishman,

much as he might love his prayer-book and hate the dissenters, the core of religion was the life of family prayer and Bible study, which the Puritans had for a hundred years struggled not in vain to make the custom of the land." It was this spirit which James met.

We have already thought sufficiently of the events which actually followed. The final rupture of Charles I. with parliamentary institutions was due to the religious situation. There were many Bible-reading families, learning their own rights, while kings and favorites were plotting war. Laud and the bishops forbade non-conforming gatherings, but they could not prevent a man's gathering his household about him while he read the great stories of the Bible, in which no king ruled when he had ceased to advance his kingdom, in which each man was shut up to God in the most vital things of his life. The discussion of the time grew keen about predestination and free-will. One meant that only God had power; the other meant that men, and if men, then specially kings, might control other men if only they could. Not fully, but vaguely, the crowd understood. Very fully, and not vaguely, the leaders understood. Predestination and Parliament became a cry. That is, control lifted out of the hands of the free-will

of some monarch into the hands of a sovereign God to whom every man had the same access that any other man had. Laud decreed that all such discussion should cease. He revived an old decree that no book could be printed without consent of an archbishop or the Bishop of London. So the books became secret and more virulent each year. The civil war (1642–46) between Charles and Parliament was a war of ideas. It is sometimes called a war of religion, not quite fairly. It was due to the religious situation, but actually it was for the liberties of the people against the power of the king. And that question rooted far down in another regarding the rights of men to be free in their religious life. Charles struck his coin at Oxford with the Latin inscription: "The Protestant religion; the laws of England; the liberties of Parliament." But he struck it too late. He had been trifling with the freedom of the people, and they had learned from their fireside Bibles and from their pulpits that no man may command another in his relation to God. It was long after that Burns described "The Cottar's Saturday Night"; but he was only describing a condition which was already in vogue, and which was having tremendous influence in England as well as in Scotland:

"The cheerfu' supper done, wi' serious face,
They, round the ingle, form a circle wide;
The sire turns o'er, wi' patriarchal grace,
The big ha' Bible, ance his father's pride:
His bonnet rev'rently is laid aside,
His lyart haffets wearing thin an' bare;
Those strains that once did sweet in Zion glide,
He wales a portion with judicious care,
And 'Let us worship God!' he says, with solemn air."

Under such guidance as this the people of England, Puritans and others, relaxed the power of the Stuarts and became a democracy. For democracy is not a form of government. It can exist under monarchy, provided the monarchy is a convenience of the will of the people, as it is in England. It can exist under institutions like our own, provided they also are held as a convenience of the people. This was no rebellion against some form of monarchy. It was simply a claim of every man to have his rights before God. Under the Parliament of eighteen years duration, the Independents, Presbyterians, and all other non-conforming bodies suffered as heavily as under James and Charles, yet they did not flee the land. Their battle was really won. They believed the time would come when they as part of "the people" who now governed should assert themselves. If they were perse-

cuted, it was under a government where yet they might hope for their rights. Fleeing from England in 1620 was heroism; fleeing in 1640 would have been cowardly. It is impossible to calculate what was the revelation to the readers of the English Bible of their rights.

Let Trevelyan tell the story: "While other literary movements, however noble in quality, affect only a few, the study of the Bible was becoming the national education. Recommended by the king, translated by the Bishops, yet in chief request with the Puritans, without the rivalry of books and newspapers, the Bible told to the unscholarly the story of another age and race, not in bald generalization and doctrinal harangue, but with such wealth of simple narrative and lyrical force that each man recognized his own dim strivings after a new spirit, written clear in words two thousand years old. A deep and splendid effect was wrought by the monopoly of this Book as the sole reading of common households, in an age when men's minds were instinct with natural poetry and open to receive the light of imagination. A new religion arose, of which the mythus was the Bible stories and the pervading spirit the direct relations of man with God, exemplified in the human life. And, while imagination was kindled, the intellect was

freed by this private study of the Bible. For its private study involved its private interpretation. Each reader, even if a Churchman, became in some sort a church to himself. Hence the hundred sects and thousand doctrines that astonished foreigners and opened England's strange path to intellectual liberty. The Bible cultivated here, more than in any other land, the growth of intellectual thought and practice."[1]

All that has seemed to refer only to England, but the same essential democracy of the Bible came to America and founded the new nation. It was a handful of Puritans turned Pilgrims who set out in the Mayflower to give their Bible ideas free field. In a dozen years (1628-40), under Laud's persecution, twenty thousand Englishmen fled to join those Pilgrims. And how much turned on that! Suppose it had not happened. Then the French of the North and the cavaliers of Virginia, with the Spanish of the South, would have had only the Dutch between them. And of the four, only the Dutch had free access to the Bible. The new land would not have been English. It is an English writer who says that North America is now preparing the future of the world, and English speech is the mold in which the folk of all the world are

[1] *England under the Stuarts.*

being poured for their final shaping.[1] It is the democracy of the Bible which is the fundamental democracy of America, in which every man has it accented to him that he is so much a child of God that his rights are inalienable. They cover life and liberty and the pursuit of happiness. And though we have held that principle of democracy inconsistently at times, and have paid a terrible price for our inconsistency in the past, and may pay it in the future again, it is still true that the fundamental democracy of our American life is only that essential democracy of the Bible, where every man is made the equal of his fellow by being lifted into the same relation with Almighty God.

The Bible makes its moral appeal on the same basis. If a man is a child of God, then he is shut up to duties which cannot be avoided. Some one else may tell a man his duty in a true monarchy. In a democracy each man stands alone at the most solemn point of his duty. There is no safe democracy where men refuse to stand alone there. In Jefferson's great speech, replying to the forebodings of Patrick Henry, he insisted that if men were not competent to govern themselves they were not competent to

[1] Trevelyan, *England under the Stuarts*, p. 174.

govern other people. The first duty of any man is to take his independent place before God. Democracy is the social privilege that grows out of the meeting of these personal obligations.

Several facts strengthen this persistent moral appeal. For one thing, the Book is absolutely fair to humanity. It leaves out no line or wrinkle; but it adds none. The men with whom it deals are typical men. The facts it presents are typical facts. There are books which flatter men, make them out all good, prattle on about the essential goodness of humanity, while men who know themselves (and these are the only ones who do things) know that the story is not true. On the other hand, there are books which are depressing. Their pigments are all black. They move from the dignity of Schopenhauer's pessimism to the bedlam of Nietzsche's contempt for life and goodness. But here, also, the sane common sense of humanity comes to the rescue. The picture is not true if it is all white or all black. The Bible is absolutely fair to humanity. It moves within the circle of man's experience; and, while it deals with men, it results in a treatment of man.

That is how it comes about that the Bible inspires men, and puts them at their best. No moral appeal can be successful if it fails to reach

the better part of a man, and lays hold on him there. Just that it did for the English people. "No greater moral change ever passed over a nation than passed over England during the years that parted the middle of the reign of Elizabeth from the meeting of the Long Parliament. England became the people of a Book, and that Book was the Bible."[1]

Add to that personal appeal and that absolute fairness to humanity the constant challenge of the Bible to the nobler elements of humanity. It never trifles. It is in deadly earnest. And it makes earnest men. Probably we cannot illustrate that earnestness more clearly than by a study of one element in Puritan history, which is confused in many minds. It is the matter of the three great antagonisms of Puritanism in England and America. They can never be understood by moral triflers. They may not be approved by all the morally serious, but they will be understood by them. What are those three marked antagonisms? The antagonism to the stage, to popular frivolity, and to the pleasure Sabbath.

1. The early English stage had the approval of virtually all the people. There were few voices raised against the dramas of Shakespeare.

[1] Green, *Short History of the English People.*

But the cleavage between the Puritans and the stage grew greater as the years went on. There were riotous excesses. The later comedy after Shakespeare was incredibly gross. The tragedies were shallow, they turned not on grave scenes of conscience, but on common and cheap intrigues of incest and murder. In the mean time, "the hatred of the Puritans for the stage was only the honest hatred of God-fearing men against the foulest depravity presented in poetic and dramatic forms." The Bible was laying hold on the imagination of the people, making them serious, thoughtful, preparing them for the struggle for liberty which was soon to come. The plays of the time seemed too trifling or else too foul. The Puritans and the English people of the day were willing to be amused, if the stage would amuse them. They were willing to be taught, if the stage would teach them. But they were not willing to be amused by vice and foulness, and they were not willing to be taught by lecherous actors who parroted beautiful sentiments of virtue on the stage and lived filthy lives of incest and shame off the stage. Life had to be whole to the Puritan, as indeed it has to be to other thoughtful men. And the Bible taught him that. His concern was for the higher elements of life; his appeal was to the worthier

values in men. The concern of the stage of his day was for the more volatile elements in men. The test of a successful play was whether the crowds, any crowds, came to it. And as always happens when a man wants to catch the interest of a crowd, the stage catered to its lowest interests. You can hardly read the story of the times without feeling that the Puritan made no mistake in his day. He could not have been the thoughtful man who would stand strong in the struggle for liberty on that side of the sea and the struggle for life on this side of the sea without opposing trifling and vice.

2. The antagonism of the early Puritan to popular frivolity needs to have the times around it to be understood. No great movement carries everybody with it, and while it is still struggling the majority will be on the opposing side. While the real leadership of England was passing into the stronger and more serious hands the artificial excesses of life grew strong on the people. "Fortunes were being sunk and estates mortgaged in order that men should wear jewels and dress in colored silks." [1] In the pressure of grave national needs men persisted in frivolity. The two reigning vices were drunkenness and swearing. In their cups men were guilty of

[1] Trevelyan, *England under the Stuarts*, p. 66.

the grossest indecencies. Even their otherwise harmless sports were endangered. The popular notion of the May-pole dances misses the real point of the Puritan opposition to it in Old and New England. It was not an innocent, jovial out-door event. Once it may have been that. Very often it was only part of a day which brought immorality and vice in its train. It was part of a rural paganism. Some of the customs involved such grave perils, with their seclusion of young people from early dawn in the forests, as to make it impossible to approve it. Over against all these things the Puritans set themselves. Sometimes they carried this solemnity to an absurd length, justifying it by Scripture verses misapplied. Against the affected elegancies of speech they set the plain yea, yea and nay, nay of Scripture. In their clothing, their homes, their churches, they, and in even more marked degree, the Quakers, registered their solemn protest against the frivolity of the times. If they went too far, it is certain their protest was needed. Macaulay's epigram is familiar, that the Puritan "hated bear-baiting, not because it gave pain to the bear, but because it gave pleasure to the spectators." In so far as that is true, it is to the credit of the Puritan; for the bear can stand the pain of being baited

far better than human nature can stand the coarsening effects of baiting him, and it is nobler to oppose such sport on human grounds than on animal grounds. But, of course, the epigram is Macaulay's, and must be read with qualification. The fact is, and he says it often enough without epigrams, that the times had become trifling except as this grave, thoughtful group influenced them.

3. The attitude of the Puritans toward the Sabbath came from their serious thought of the Bible. Puritanism gave England the Sabbath again and planted it in America as an institution. Of course, these men learned all that they knew of it from the Bible. From that day, in spite of much change in thought of it, English-speaking people have never been wilful abusers of the Sabbath. But the condition in that day was very different. Most of the games were on the day set apart as the Sabbath. There were bull-baiting, bear-baiting, and football on Sunday. Calvin himself, though not in England, bowled on Sunday, and poor Knox attended festivities then, saying grimly that what little is right on week-days is not wrong on Sundays. After the service on Sunday morning the people thronged to the village green, where ale flowed freely and games were played until the evening

dance was called. It was a work-day. Elizabeth issued a special injunction that people work after service on Sundays and holidays if they wished to do so. Employers were sustained in their demand for Sunday work.

There are always people in every time who count that the ideal Sabbath. The Puritans found it when they appeared. The English Reformation found it when it came. And the Bible found it when at last it came out of obscurity and laid hold on national conditions. Whatever is to be said of other races, every period of English-speaking history assures us that our moral power increases or weakens with the rise or fall of Sabbath reverence. The Puritans saw that. They saw, as many other thoughtful people saw, that the steady, repeated observance of the Sabbath gave certain national influences a chance to work; reminded the nation of certain great underlying and undying principles; in short, brought God into human thought. The Sunday of pleasure or work could never accomplish that. Both as religionists and as patriots, as lovers of God and lovers of men, they opposed the pleasure-Sunday and held for the Sabbath.

But that comes around again to the saying that the persistent moral appeal of the Bible

gives it inevitable influence on history. It centers thought on moral issues. It challenges men to moral combats.

Such a force persistently working in men's minds is irresistible. It cannot be opposed; it can only fail by being neglected. And this is the force which has been steadily at work everywhere in English-speaking history since the King James version came to be.

LECTURE VI

THE BIBLE IN THE LIFE OF TO-DAY

THIS lecture must differ at two points from those which have preceded it. In the first place, the other lectures have dealt entirely with facts. This must deal also with judgments. In the earlier lectures we have avoided any consideration of what ought to have been and have centered our interest on what actually did occur. We especially avoided any argument based on a theory of the literary characteristics or literary influence of the Bible, but sought first to find the facts and then to discover what explained them. It might be very difficult to determine what is the actual place of the Bible in the life of to-day. Perhaps it would be impossible to give a broad, fair judgment. It is quite certain that the people of James's day did not realize the place it was taking. It is equally certain that many of those whom it most influenced were entirely unconscious of the fact. It is only when we look back upon the scene that

we discover the influence that was moving them. But, while it is difficult to say what the place of the Bible actually is in our own times, the place it ought to have is easier to point out. That will involve a study of the conditions of our times, which suggest the need for its influence. While we must consider the facts, therefore, we will be compelled to pass some judgments also, and therein this lecture must differ from the others.

The second fact of difference is that while the earlier lectures have dealt with the King James version, this must deal rather with the Bible. For the King James version is not the Bible. There are many versions; there is but one Bible. Whatever the translators put into the various tongues, the Bible itself remains the same. There are values in the new versions; but they are simply the old value of the Bible itself. It is a familiar maxim that the newest version is the oldest Bible. We are not making the Bible up to date when we make a new version; we are only getting back to its date. A revision in our day is the effort to take out of the original writings what men of King James's day may have put in, and give them so much the better chance. There is no revised Bible; there is only a revised version. Readers sometimes feel disturbed at what they consider the changes

made in the Bible. The fact is, the revision which deserves the name is lessening the changes in the Bible; it is giving us the Bible as it actually was and taking from us elements which were not part of it. One can sympathize with the eloquent Dr. Storrs, who declared, in an address in 1879, that he was against any new version because of the history of the King James version, describing it as a great oak with roots running deep and branches spreading wide. He declared we were not ready to give it up for any modern tulip-tree. There is something in that, though such figures are not always good argument. Yet the value to any book of a worthy translation is beyond calculation. The outstanding literary illustration of that fact is familiar. The *Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyàm* lay in Persian literature and in different English translations long before Fitzgerald made it a household classic for literary people. The translator made the book for us in more marked way than the original writer did. In somewhat the same way the King James version gave to the English-speaking people the Bible; and no other version has taken its place.

Yet that was not a mistaken move nearly forty years ago, when the revision of the King James version was proposed and undertaken.

Thirty years ago (1881) it was completed in what we ordinarily call the Revised Version, and ten years ago (1901) the American form of that Revised Version appeared. Few things could more definitely prove the accepted place of the King James version than the fact that we seem to hear less to-day of the Revised Version than we used to hear, and that, while the American Revised Version is incomparably the best in existence in its reproduction of the original, even it makes way slowly. In less than forty years the King James version crowded all its competitors off the field. The presence of the Revised Version of 1881 has not appreciably affected the sales or the demand for the King James version. In the minds of most people the English and the American revisions stand as admirable commentaries on the King James version. If one wishes to know wherein the King James version failed of representing the original, he will learn it better from those versions than from any number of commentaries; but the number of those to whom one or other of the versions has supplanted the King James version is not so large as might have been expected.

There were several reasons for a new English version of the Bible. It was, of course, no indignity to the King James version. Those

translators frankly said that they had no hope to make a final version of the Scriptures. It would be very strange if in three hundred years language should not have grown by reason of the necessities of the race that used it, so that at some points a book might be outgrown. In another lecture it has been intimated that the English Bible, by reason of its constant use, has tended to fix and confirm the English language. But no one book, nor any set of books, could confine a living tongue. Some of the reasons for a new version which give value to these two revisions may be mentioned.

1. Though the King James version was made just after the literary renaissance, the classical learning of to-day is far in advance of that day. The King James version is occasionally defective in its use of tenses and verbs in the Greek and also in the Hebrew. We have Greek and Hebrew scholars who are able more exactly to reproduce in English the meaning of the original. It would be strange if that were not so.

2. Then there have been new and important discoveries of Biblical literature which date earlier in Christian history than any our fathers knew three hundred years ago. In some instances those earlier discoveries have shown that a phrase here or there has been wrongly intro-

duced into the text. There has been no marked instance where a phrase was added by the revisers; that is, a phrase dropped out of the original and now replaced. One illustration of the omission of a phrase will be enough. In the fifth chapter of I John the seventh verse reads: "For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one." In the revised versions it is omitted, because it seems quite certain that it was not in the original writing. It does not at all alter the meaning of Scripture. While it appears in most of the best manuscripts which were available for the King James translators, earlier manuscripts found since that time have shown that it was formerly written at the side as a gloss, and was by some transcriber set over in the text itself. The process of making the early manuscripts shows how easily that could have occurred. Let us suppose that two or three manuscripts were being made at once by different copyists. One was set to read the original; as he read, the others wrote. It would be easy to suppose that he might read this marginal reference as a suitable commentary on the text, and that one or more of the writers could have written it in the text. It could easily happen also that a copyist,

even seeing where it stood, might suppose it had been omitted by the earlier copyist, and that he had completed his work by putting it on the margin. So the next copyist would put it into his own text. Once in a manuscript, it would readily become part of the accepted form. Discoveries that bring that sort of thing to light are of value in giving us an accurate version of the original Bible.

3. Then there are in our King James version a few archaic and obsolete phrases. We have already spoken of them. Most of them have been avoided in the revised versions. The neuter possessive pronoun, for example, has been put in. Animal names have been clarified, obsolete expressions have been replaced by more familiar ones, and so on.

4. Then there were certain inaccuracies in the King James version. The fact is familiar that they transliterated certain words which they could not well translate. In the revised versions that has been carried farther still. The words which they translated "hell" have been put back into their Hebrew and Greek equivalents, and appear as Sheol and Hades. Another instance is that of an Old Testament word, Asherah, which was translated always "grove," and was used to describe the object of worship

of the early enemies of Israel. The translation does not quite represent the fact, and the revisers have therefore replaced the old Hebrew word Asherah. The transliterations of the King James version have not been changed into translations. Instead, the number of transliterations has been increased in the interest of accuracy. At one point one might incline to be adversely critical of the American revisers. They have transliterated the Hebrew word Jehovah; so they have taken sides in a controversy where scholars have room to differ. The version would have gained in strength if it had retained the dignified and noble word "Lord," which comes as near representing the idea of the Hebrew word for God as any word we could find. It must be added that the English of neither of our new versions has the rhythm and movement of the old version. That is partly because we are so accustomed to the old expressions and new ones strike the ear unpleasantly. In any case, the versions differ plainly in their English. It seems most unlikely that either of these versions shall ever have the literary influence of the King James, though any man who will prophesy about that affects a wisdom which he has not.

These, then, are the two differences between this lecture and the preceding ones, that in this

lecture we shall deal with judgments as well as facts, and that we shall deal with the Bible of to-day rather than the King James version.

Passing to the heart of the subject, the question appears at once whether the Bible has or can have to-day the influence or the place which it seems to have had in the past. Two things force that question: Has not the critical study of the Bible itself robbed it of its place of authority, and have not the changes of our times destroyed its possibilities of influence? That is, on the one hand, has not the Bible been changed? On the other hand, has it not come into such new conditions that it cannot do its old work?

It is a natural but a most mistaken idea that the critical study of the Bible is a new thing. From long before the childhood of any of us there has been sharp controversy about the Bible. It is a controversy-provoking Book. It cannot accept blind faith. It always has made men think, and it makes them think in the line of their own times. The days when no questions were raised about the Bible were the days when men had no access to it.

There are some who take all the Bible for granted. They know that there is indifference to it among friends and in their social circle; but how real the dispute about the Bible is no

one realizes until he comes where new ideas, say ideas of socialism, are in the air. There, with the breaking of other chains, is a mighty effort to break this bond also. In such circles the Bible is little read. It is discussed, and time-worn objections are bandied about, always growing as they pass. In these circles also every supposedly adverse result of critical study is welcomed and remembered. If it is said that there are unexplained contradictions in the Bible, that fact is remembered. But if it is said further that those contradictions bid fair to yield to further critical study, or to a wiser understanding of the situations in which they are involved, that fact is overlooked. The tendency in these circles is to keep alive rather the adverse phases of critical study than its favorable phases. Some of those who speak most fiercely about the study of the Bible, by what is known as higher criticism, are least intelligent as to what higher criticism actually means. Believers regret it, and unbelievers rejoice in it. As a matter of fact, in developing any strong feeling about higher criticism one only falls a prey to words; he mistakes the meaning of both the words involved.

Criticism does not mean finding fault with the Bible.[1] It is almost an argument for total de-

[1] Jefferson, *Things Fundamental*, p. 90.

pravity that we have made the word gain an adverse meaning, so that if the average man were told that he had been "criticized" by another he would suppose that something had been said against him. Of course, intelligent people know that that is not necessarily involved. When Kant wrote *The Critique of Pure Reason* he was not finding fault with pure reason. He was only making careful analytical study of it. Now, critical study of the Bible is only careful study of it. It finds vastly more new beauties than unseen defects. In the same way the adjective "higher" comes in for misunderstanding. It does not mean superior; it means more difficult. Lower criticism is the study of the text itself. What word ought to be here, and exactly what does that word mean? What is the comparative value of this manuscript over against that one? If this manuscript has a certain word and that other has a slightly different one, which word ought to be used?

Take one illustration from the Old Testament and one from the New to show what lower or textual criticism does. In the ninth chapter of Isaiah the third verse reads: "Thou hast multiplied the nation and *not* increased the joy." That word "not" is troublesome. It disagrees with the rest of the passage. Now it happens

that there are two Hebrew words pronounced "lo," just alike in sound, but spelled differently. One means "not," the other means "to him" or "his." Put the second word in, and the sentence reads: "Thou hast multiplied the nation and increased its joy." That fits the context exactly. Lower criticism declares that it is therefore the probable reading, and corrects the text in that way.

The other illustration is from the Epistle of James, where in the fourth chapter the second verse reads: "Ye lust, and have not; ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain; ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not." Now there is no commentator nor thoughtful reader who is not arrested by that word "kill." It does not seem to belong there. It is far more violent than anything else in the whole text, and it is difficult to understand in what sense the persons to whom James was writing could be said to kill. Yet there is no Greek manuscript which does not have that word. Well, it is in the field of lower criticism to observe that there is a Greek word which sounds very much like this word "kill," which means to envy; that would fit exactly into the whole text here. All that lower criticism can do is to point out such a probability.

When this form of criticism has done its part, and careful study has yielded a text which holds together and which represents the very best which scholarship can find for the original, there is still a field more difficult than that, higher in the sense that it demands a larger and broader view of the whole subject. Here one studies the meaning of the whole, the ideas in it, seeks to find how the revelation of God has progressed according to the capacities of men to receive it. Higher criticism is the careful study of the historical and original meanings of Scripture, the effort to determine dates and times and, so far as may be, the author of each writing, analyzing its ideas, the general Greek or Hebrew style, the relation of part to part. That is not a thing to be afraid of. It is a method of study used in every realm. It is true that some of the men who have followed that method have made others afraid of it, because they were afraid of these men themselves. It is possible to claim far too much for such study. But if the result of higher criticism should be to show that the latter half of the prophecy of Isaiah is much later than the earlier half, that is not a destruction of the Word of God. It is not an irreverent result of study. If the result of higher criticism is to show that by reason of its content, and the lessons

which it especially urges, the Epistle to the Hebrews was not written by the Apostle Paul, as it does not at any point claim to have been, why, that is not irreverent, that is not destructive. There is a destructive form of higher criticism; against that there is reason to set up bulwarks. But there is a constructive form of it also. Scholarly opinion will tell any one who asks that criticism has not affected the fundamental values of the Bible. In the studies which have just now been made we have not instanced anything in the Bible that is subject to change. No matter what the result of critical study may be, the fundamental democracy of the Scripture remains. It continues to make its persistent moral appeal on any terms. Both those great facts continue. Other great facts abide with them. And on their account it is to our interest to know as much as we can learn about it. The Bible has not been lessened in its value, has not been weakened in itself, by anything that has taken place in critical study. On the other hand, the net result of such studies as archaeology has been the confirmation of much that was once disputed. Sir William Ramsay is authority for saying that the spade of the excavator is to-day digging the grave of many enemies of the Bible.

Take the second question, whether these times

have not in them elements that weaken the hold of the Bible. There again we must distinguish between facts and judgments. There are certain things in these times which relax the hold of any authoritative book. There is a general relaxing of the sense of authority. It does not come alone from the intellectual awakening, because so far as that awakening is concerned, it has affected quite as much men who continue loyal to the authority of the Bible as others. No, this relaxing of the sense of authority is the result of the first feeling of democracy which does not know law. Democracy ought to mean that men are left independent of the control of other individuals because they realize and wish to obey the control of God or of the whole equally with their fellows. When, instead, one feels independent of others, and adds to that no sense of a higher control which he must be free to obey, the result is not democracy, but individualism. Democracy involves control; individualism does not. A vast number of people in passing from any sense of the right of another individual to control them have also passed out of the sense of the right of God or of the whole to control them. So that from a good many all sense of authority has passed. It is characteristic of our age. And it is a stage in our prog-

ress toward real democracy, toward true human liberty.

Observe that relaxed sense of authority in the common attitude toward law. Most men feel it right to disregard a law of the community which they do not like. It appears in trivial things. If the community requires that ashes be kept in a metal receptacle, citizens approve it in general, but reserve to themselves the right to consider it a foolish law and to do something else if that is not entirely convenient. If the law says that paper must not be thrown on the sidewalk, it means little that it is the law. Those who are inclined to be clean and neat and do not like to see paper lying around will keep the law; those who are otherwise will be indifferent to it. That is at the root of the matter-of-course saying that a law cannot be enforced unless public opinion sustains it. Under any democratic system laws virtually always have the majority opinion back of them; but the minority reserve the right to disregard them if they choose, and the minority will be more aggressive. Rising from those relaxations of law into far more important ones, it appears that men in business life, feeling themselves hampered by legislation, set themselves to find a way to evade it, justifying themselves in doing so. The mere

fact that it is the law does not weigh heavily. This is, however, only an inevitable stage in progress from the earliest periods of democracy to later and more substantial periods. It is a stage which will pass. There will come a democracy where the rule of the whole is frankly recognized, and where each man holds himself independent of his fellows only in the sense that he will claim the right to hold such relation to God and his duty as he himself may apprehend.

In these times, also, the development of temporal and material prosperity with the intellectual mood which is involved in that affects the attitude of the age toward the Bible. Sometimes it is spoken of as a scientific age over against the earlier philosophical ages. Perhaps that will do for a rough statement of the facts. It is the age of experiment, of trying things out, and there naturally works into men a feeling that the things that will yield to the most material scientific experimentation are the things about which they can be certain and which are of real value. That naturally involves a good deal of appreciation of the present, and calls for the improvement of the conditions of present life first of all. It looks more important to see that a man is well fed, well housed, well clothed, and well educated than that he should have the

interests of eternity pressed on his attention. That is a comparatively late feeling. It issues partly from the fact that this is a scientific age, when science has had its attention turned to the needs of humanity.

Another result of our scientific age is the magnifying of the natural, while the Bible frankly asserts the supernatural. No effort to get the supernatural out of the Bible, in order to make it entirely acceptable to the man who scouts the supernatural, has thus far proved successful. Of course, the supernatural can be taken out of the Bible; but it will destroy the Bible. Nor is there much gain in playing with words and insisting that everything is supernatural or that everything is natural. There is a difference between the two, and in an age which insists upon nature or natural laws or forces or events as all-sufficient it is almost inevitable that the Bible should lose its hold, at least temporarily.

Regarding all this there are some things that need to be said. For one thing, this, too, is a passing condition. As a matter of fact, men are not creatures of time. They actually have eternal connections, and the great outstanding facts which have always made eternity of importance continue. The fact is that men continue to die, and that the men who are left be-

hind cannot avoid the sense of mystery and awe which is involved in that fact. The fact also is that the human emotions cannot be explained on the lower basis, and the only reason men think they can be is because they have in the back of their minds the old explanations which they cast into the lower forms, deceiving themselves into thinking they are new ideas when they are not.

It ought to be added that the Bible has greatly suffered in all its history at the hands of men who have believed in it and have fought in its behalf. Many of the controversies which were hottest were needless and injurious. All the folly has not been on one side. Some one referred the other day to a list of more than a hundred scientific theories which were proposed at the beginning of the last century and abandoned at the end of it. Scientific men are feeling their way, many of them reverently and devoutly, some of them rather blatantly and with a readiness for publication, which hastens them into notoriety. But there has been enough folly on both sides to make every one go cautiously. It has been remarked that in Dr. Draper's book *The Conflict Between Science and Religion* he makes science appear as a strong-limbed angel of God whereas religion is always

a great ass. The title of the book itself is not fair. In no proper understanding of the words can there be any conflict between science and religion. There can be a conflict, as Dr Andrew D. White puts it, between science and theology. There can certainly be contest between scientists and religionists. Science and religion have no conflict.

It is interesting to observe how far back most of the supposed conflicts actually lie. There is no warfare now; and, while our fathers one or two generations ago felt that they must fly to the defense of religion against the attacks of science no man wastes his strength doing that to-day That period has passed. The trouble is that some good people do not know it, and are just fond enough of a bit of a tussle to keep up the fighting in the mountain-passes while out in the plain the main armies have laid down their arms and are busy tilling the soil.

The period of conflict is past, partly because we are learning to distinguish between the Bible as it really is and certain long-established ideas about the Bible which came from other sources and have become attached to it until it seemed to sustain them. The proper doctrine of evolution is entirely compatible with the Bible. The great Dr. Hodge declared that the consistent

Darwinian must be an atheist. For that matter, Shelley defended himself by saying that, of course, "the consistent Newtonian must necessarily be an atheist." But fifty years have made great changes in the doctrine of evolution, and the old scare has been over for some time. Newton is honored in the church quite as much as in the university, and Darwin is not a name to frighten anybody. Understanding evolution better and knowing the Bible better, the two do not jangle out of tune so badly but that harmony is promised.

The doctrine of the antiquity of the world is entirely compatible with the Bible, though it is not compatible with the dates which Archbishop Ussher, in the time of King James, put at the head of the columns. That is so with other scientific theories. Any one who has read much of history has attended the obsequies of so many theories in the realm of science that he ought to know that he is wasting his strength in trying to bring about a constant reconciliation between scientific and religious theories. It is his part to keep an open mind in assurance of the unity of truth, an assurance that there is no fact which can possibly come to light and no true theory of facts which can possibly be formed which does not serve the interest of the truth,

which the Bible also presents. The Bible does not concern itself with all departments of knowledge. So far as mistakes have been made on the side of those who believe it, they have issued from forgetting that fact more than from any other one cause.

On the other hand, it has sometimes occurred that believers in the Bible have been quite too eager to accommodate themselves to purely passing phases of objection to it. The matter mentioned a moment ago, the excision of the supernatural, is a case in point. The easy and glib way in which some have sought to get around difficulties, by talking in large terms about the progressiveness of the revelation, as though the progress were from error to truth, instead of from half light to full light, is another illustration. The nimble way in which we have turned what is given as history into fiction, and allowed imagination to roam through the Bible, is another illustration. One of our later writers tells the story of Jonah, and says it sounds like fiction; why not call it fiction? Another tells the story of the exodus from Egypt, and says it sounds like fiction; why not call it fiction? Well, certainly the objection is not to the presence of fiction in the Bible. It is there, openly, confessedly, unashamed. Fiction can be used with

great profit in teaching religious truth. But fiction may not masquerade in the guise of history, if men are to be led by it or mastered by it. If the way to be rid of difficulties in a narrative is to turn it into pious fiction, there are other instances where it might be used for relief in emergencies. The story of the crucifixion of Christ can be told so that it sounds like fiction; why not call it fiction? Certainly the story of the conversion of Paul can be made to sound like fiction; why not call it fiction? And there is hardly any bit of narrative that can be made to sound so like fiction as the landing of the Pilgrims; why not call that fiction? It is the easy way out; the difficulties are all gone like Alice's cat, and there is left only the broad smile of some moral lesson to be learned from the fiction. It is not, however, the courageous nor the perfectly square way out. Violence has to be done to the plain narrative; historical statement has to be made only a mask. And the only reason for it is that there are difficulties not yet cleared. As for the characters involved, Charles Reade, the novelist, calling himself "a veteran writer of fiction," declares that the explanation of these characters, Jonah being one of them, by invention is incredible and absurd: "Such a man [as himself] knows the artifices

and the elements of art. Here the artifices are absent, and the elements surpassed." It is not uncommon for one who has found this easy way out of difficulties to declare with a wave of his hand, that everybody now knows that this or that book in the Bible is fiction, when, as a matter of fact, that is not at all an admitted opinion. The Bible will never gain its place and retain its authority while those who believe in it are spineless and topple over at the first touch of some one's objection. It could not be a great Book; it could not serve the purposes of a race if it presented no problems of understanding and of belief, and all short and easy methods of getting rid of those problems are certain to leave important elements of them out of sight.

All this means that the changes of these times rather present additional reason for a renewed hold on the Bible. It presents what the times peculiarly need. Instead of making the influence of the Bible impossible, these changes make the need for the Bible the greater and give it greater opportunity.

Add three notable points at which these times feel and still need the influence of the Bible. First, they have and still need its literary influence. So far as its ideas and forces and words

are interwoven in the great literature of the past, it is essential still to the understanding of that literature. It remains true that English literature, certainly of the past and also of the present, cannot be understood without knowledge of the Bible. The Yale professor of literature, quoted so often, says: "It would be worth while to read the Bible carefully and repeatedly, if only as a key to modern culture, for to those who are unfamiliar with its teachings and its diction all that is best in English literature of the present century is as a sealed book."

From time to time there occur painful reminders of the fact that men supposed to know literature do not understand it because they are not familiar with the Bible. Some years ago a college president tested a class of thirty-four men with a score of extracts from Tennyson, each of which contained a Scriptural allusion, none of them obscure. The replies were suggestive and quite appalling. Tennyson wrote, in the "Supposed Confessions":

> "My sin was a thorn among the thorns that girt Thy brow."

Of these thirty-four young men nine of them did not understand that quotation. Tennyson wrote:

"Like Hezekiah's, backward runs
The shadow of my days."

Thirty-two of the thirty-four did not know what that meant. The meaning of the line,

"For I have flung thee pearls and find thee swine,'

was utterly obscure to twenty-two of the thirty-four. One of them said it was a reference to "good opportunities given but not improved.' Another said it was equivalent to the counsel "not to expect to find gold in a hay-stack.' Even the line,

"A Jonah's gourd
Up in one night, and due to sudden sun,"

was utterly baffling to twenty-eight of the thirty-four. One of them spoke of it as an "allusion to the uncertainty of the length of life." Another thought it was a reference to "the occasion of Jonah's being preserved by the whale." Another counted it "an allusion to the emesis of Jonah by the whale." Another considered it a reference to "the swallowing of Jonah by a whale," and yet another considered that it referred to "things grand, but not worthy of worship because they are perishable." It is amazing to read that in response to Tennyson's lines,

"Follow Light and do the Right—for man can
half control his doom—
Till you find the deathless Angel seated in the
vacant tomb,"

only sixteen were able to give an explanation of its meaning! The lines from the "Holy Grail" were equally baffling:

"Perhaps like Him of Cana in Holy Writ,
Our Arthur kept his best until the last."

Twenty-four of these thirty-four young men could not recall what that meant. One said that the keeping of the best wine until the last meant "waiting till the last moment to be baptized!"

All that may be solely the fault of these young men. Professor Lounsbury once said that his experience in the class-room had taught him the infinite capacity of the human mind to withstand the introduction of knowledge. Very likely earnest effort had been made to teach these young men the Bible; but it is manifest that they had successfully resisted the efforts. If Tennyson were the only poet who could not be understood without knowledge of the Bible, it might not matter so much, but no one can read Browning nor Carlyle nor Macaulay nor Huxley with entire intelligence without knowledge of the greater facts and forces of Scripture.

The value of the allusions can be shown by comparing them with those of mythology. No one can read most of Shelley with entire satisfaction without a knowledge of Greek mythology. That is one reason why Shelley has so much passed out of popularity. We do not know Greek mythology, and we have very largely lost Shelley from our literary possession. The chief power of these other great writers will go from us when our knowledge of the Scripture goes.

The danger is not simply with reference to the great literature of the past. There is danger of losing appreciation of the more delicate touches of current literature, sometimes of a complete missing of the meaning. An orator describing present political and social conditions used a fine phrase, that "it is time the nation camped for a season at the foot of the mount." Only a knowledge of Bible history will bring as a flash before one the nation in the desert at Sinai learning the meaning and power of law. Yet an intelligent man, hearing that remark, said that he counted it a fine figure, that he thought there did come in the life of every nation a time before it began its ascent to the heights when it ought to pause and camp at the foot of the mountain to get its breath! After Lincoln's assassination Garfield stood on the steps in New

York, and said: "Clouds and darkness are around about him! God reigns and the government at Washington still lives!" Years after, some one referring to that, said that it was a beautiful sentence, that the reference to "clouds and darkness" was a beautiful symbolism, but that Garfield had a great knack in the building-up of fine phrases! He lacked utterly the background of the great Psalm which was in Garfield's mind, and which gives that phrase double meaning. If we go back to Tennyson again, some one has proposed the inquiry why he should have called one of his poems "Rizpah," since there was no one of that name mentioned in the whole poem! When, some years ago, a book was published, *The Children of Gideon*, one of the reviewers could not understand why that title was used, since no one of that name appeared in the entire volume. And when Mrs. Wharton's book, *The House of Mirth*, came out some one spoke of the irony of the title; but it is the irony of the Scriptures and the book calls for a Scriptural knowledge for its entire understanding.

Take even an encyclopedia article. Who can understand these two sentences without instant knowledge of Scripture? "Marlowe and Shakespeare, the young Davids of the day, tried the armor of Saul before they went out to battle,

then wisely laid it off." "Arnold, like Aaron of old, stands between the dead and the living; but, unlike Aaron, he holds no smoking censor of propitiation to stay the plague which he feels to be devouring his generation."[1] That is in an encyclopedia to which young people are often referred. What will they make out of it without the Bible? In a widely distributed school paper, in the question-and-answer department, occurs the inquiry: "Who composed the inscription on the Liberty Bell?" The inscription is, "Proclaim liberty throughout all the land to all the inhabitants thereof."[2] It is to be hoped it was a very young person who needed to ask who "composed" that expression!

This applies to all the great classics. There has come about a "decay of literary allusions," as one of our papers editorially says. In much of our writing, either the transient or the permanent, men can no longer risk easy reference to classical literature. "Readers of American biography must often be struck with the important part which literary recollection played in the life of a cultured person a generation or two ago. These men had read Homer, Xenophon and Virgil, Shakespeare, Byron and Words-

[1] *New International Encyclopedia*, art. on English Literature.
[2] *Current Events*, January 12, 1912.

worth, Lamb, De Quincey and Coleridge. They were not afraid of being called pedants because they occasionally used a Latin phrase or referred to some great name of Greece or Rome." That is not so commonly true to-day. Especially is there danger of losing easy acquaintance with the great Bible references.

There are familiar reasons for it. For one thing, there has been a great increase of literature. Once there was little to read, and that little became familiar. One would have been ashamed to pretend to culture and not to know such literature well. Now there is so much that one cannot know it all, and most men follow the line of least resistance. That line is not where great literature lies. Once the problem was how to get books enough for a family library. Now the problem is how to get library enough for the books. Magazines, papers, volumes of all grades overflow. "The Bible has been buried beneath a landslide of books." The result is that the greatest literary landmark of the English tongue threatens to become unknown, or else to be looked upon as of antiquarian rather than present worth. There our Puritan fathers had the advantage. As President Faunce puts it: "For them the Bible was the norm and goal of all study. They had achieved the concentration

of studies, and the Bible was the center. They learned to read that they might read the literature of Israel; their writing was heavy with noble Old Testament phrases; the names of Old Testament heroes they gave to their children; its words of immortal hope they inscribed on their tombstones; its Mosaic commonwealth they sought to realize in England and America; its decalogue was the foundation of their laws, and its prophecies were a light shining in a dark place. Such a unification of knowledge produced a unified character, simple, stalwart, invincible." It is very different in our own day. As so-called literature increases it robs great literature of its conspicuous outstanding character, and many men who pride themselves on the amount they read would do far better to read a thousandth part as much and let that smaller part be good.

Another reason for this decay of the influence of literary knowledge of the Bible is the shallowness of much of our thinking. If the Bible were needed for nothing else in present literary life, it would be needed for the deepening of literary currents. The vast flood of flotsam and jetsam which pours from the presses seldom floats on a deep current. It is surface matter for the most part. It does not take itself seriously, and it

is quite impossible to take it seriously. It does not deal with great themes, or when it touches upon them it deals with them in a trifling way. To men interested chiefly in literature of this kind the Bible cannot be of interest.

That is a passing condition, and out of it is certain to come here and there a masterpiece of literature. When it does appear, it will be found to reveal the same influences that have made great literature in the past, issuing more largely from the Bible than from any other book. That is the main point of a bit of counsel which Professor Bowen used to give his Harvard students. To form a good English style, he told them, a student ought to keep near at hand a Bible, a volume of Shakespeare, and Bacon's essays. That group of books would enlarge the vocabulary, would supply a store of words, phrases, and allusions, and save the necessity of ransacking a meager and hide-bound diction in order to make one's meaning plain. Coleridge in his *Table-Talk* adds that "intense study of the Bible will keep any writer from being *vulgar* in point of style." So it may be urged that these times have and still need the literary influence of the Bible.

Add that the times have and still need its moral steadying. Every age seems to its own

thoughtful people to lack moral steadiness, and they tend to compare it with other ages which look steadier. That is a virtually invariable opinion of such men. The comparison with other ages is generally fallacious, yet the fact is real for each age. Many things tend in this age to unsettle moral solidity. Some of them are peculiar to this time, others are not. But one of the great influences which the Bible is perpetually tending to counteract is stated in best terms in an experience of Henry M. Stanley. It was on that journey to Africa when he found David Livingstone, under commission from one of the great newspapers. Naturally he had made up his load as light as possible. Of books he had none save the Bible; but wrapped about his bottles of medicine and other articles were many copies of newspapers. Stanley says that "strangest of all his experiences were the changes wrought in him by the reading of the Bible and those newspapers in melancholy Africa." He was frequently sick with African fever, and took up the Bible to while away his hours of recovery. During the hours of health he read the newspapers. "And thus, somehow or other, my views toward newspapers were entirely recast," while he held loyal to his profession as a newspaper man. This is the critical sentence in Stanley's

telling of the story: "As seen in my loneliness, there was this difference between the Bible and the newspapers. The one reminded me that apart from God my life was but a bubble of air, and it made me remember my Creator; the other fostered arrogance and worldliness." [1] There is no denying such an experience as that. That is precisely the moral effect of the Bible as compared with the moral effect of the newspaper accounts of current life. Democracy should always be happy; but it must always be serious, morally steady. Anything that tends to give men light views of wrong, to make evil things humorous, to set out the ridiculous side of gross sins is perilous to democracy. It not only is injurious to personal morals; it is bound sooner or later to injure public morals. There is nothing that so persistently counteracts that tendency of current literature as does the Bible.

From an ethical point of view, "the ethical content of Paul is quite as important for us as the system of Schopenhauer or Nietzsche. The organization of the New England town meeting is no more weighty for the American boy than the organization of the early Christian Church. John Adams and John Hancock and Abraham Lin-

[1] *Autobiography*, p. 252.

coln are only the natural successors of the great Hebrew champions of liberty and righteousness who faced Pharoah and Ahab and put to flight armies of aliens." But aside from the definite ethical teaching of the Bible there is need for that strong impression of ethical values which it gives in the characters around which it has gathered. The conception of the Bible which makes it appear as a steady progression should add to its authority, not take from it. The development is not from error to truth, but from light to more light. It is sometimes said that the standards of morality of some parts of Scripture are not to be commended. But they are not the standards of morality of Scripture, but of their times. They are not taught in Scripture; they are only stated; and they are so stated that instantly a thoughtful man discovers that they are stated to be condemned. When did it become true that all that is told of a good man is to be approved? It is not pretended that Abraham did right always. David was confessedly wrong. They move much of the time in half-light, yet the sum total of the impression of their writings is inevitably and invariably for a more substantial morality. These times need the moral steadying of the Bible to make men, not creatures of the day and not creatures of

their whims, but creatures of all time and of fundamental laws.

Add the third fact, that our times have and still need the religious influence of the Bible. No democracy can dispense with religious culture. No book makes for religion as does the Bible. That is its chief purpose. No book can take its place; no influence can supplant it. Max Muller made lifelong study of the Buddhist and other Indian books. He gave them to the English-speaking world. Yet he wrote to a friend of his impression of the immense superiority of the Bible in such terms that his friend replied: "Yes, you are right; how tremendously ahead of other sacred books is the Bible! The difference strikes one as almost unfairly great." [1] Writing in an India paper, *The Kayestha Samachar*, in August, 1902, a Hindu writer said: "I am not a Christian; but half an hour's study of the Bible will do more to remodel a man than a whole day spent in repeating the slokas of the Purinas or the mantras of the Rig-Veda." In the earlier chapters of the Koran Christians are frequently spoken of as "people of the Book." It is a suggestive phrase. If Christianity has any value for American life, then the Bible has just that

[1] Speer, *Light of the World*, iv.

value. Christianity is made by the Bible; it has never been vital nor nationally influential for good without the Bible.

Sometimes, because of his strong words regarding the conflict between science and theology, the venerable American diplomat and educator, Dr. Andrew D. White, is thought of as a foe to religion. No one who reads his biography can have that impression half an hour. Near the close of it is a paragraph of singular insight and authority which fits just this connection: "It will, in my opinion, be a sad day for this or for any people when there shall have come in them an atrophy of the religious nature; when they shall have suppressed the need of communication, no matter how vague, with a supreme power in the universe; when the ties which bind men of similar modes of thought in the various religious organizations shall be dissolved; when men, instead of meeting their fellow-men in assemblages for public worship which give them a sense of brotherhood, shall lounge at home or in clubs; when men and women, instead of bringing themselves at stated periods into an atmosphere of prayer, praise, and aspiration, to hear the discussion of higher spiritual themes, to be stirred by appeals to their nobler nature in behalf of faith, hope, and charity, and to be moved

by a closer realization of the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man, shall stay at home and give their thoughts to the Sunday papers, or to the conduct of their business, or to the languid search for some refuge from boredom." [1] Those are wise, strong words, and they sustain to the full what has been urged, that these times still need the religious influence of the Bible.

The influence of the Bible on the literary, moral, and religious life of the times is already apparent. But that influence needs to be constantly strengthened. There remains, therefore, to suggest some methods of giving the Bible increasing power. It should be recognized first and last that only thoughtful people will do it. No help will come from careless people. Moreover, only people who believe in the common folk will do it. Those who are aristocrats in the sense that they do not believe that common people can be trusted will not concern themselves to increase the power of the Bible. But for those who are thoughtful and essentially democratic the duty is a very plain one. There are four great agencies which may well magnify the Bible and whose influence will bring the Bible into increasing power in national life.

[1] *Autobiography*, vol. ii, p. 570.

First among these, of course, must be the Church. The accent which it will place on the Bible will naturally be on its religious value, though its moral value will take a close second place. It is essential for the Church to hold itself true to its religious foundations. Only men who have some position of leadership can realize the immense pressure that is on to-day to draw the Church into forms of activity and methods of service which are much to be commended, but which have to be constantly guarded lest they deprive it of power and concern in the things which are peculiar to its own life and which it and it alone can contribute to the public good. The Church needs to develop for itself far better methods of instruction in the Bible, so that it may as far as possible drill those who come under its influence in the knowledge of the Bible for its distinctive religious value. This is neither the time nor the place for a full statement of that responsibility. It is enough to see how the very logic of the life of the Church requires that it return with renewed energy to its magnifying and teaching of the Bible.

The second agency which may be called upon is the press. The accent of the press will be on the moral value of the Bible, the service which

its teaching renders to the national and personal life. There seems to be a hopeful returning tendency to allusions to the Scripture in newspaper and magazine publications. It is rare to find among the higher-level newspapers an editorial page, where the most thoughtful writing appears, in which on any day there do not appear Scripture allusions or references. When that is seriously done, when Scripture is used for some other purpose than to point a jest, it helps to restore the Bible to its place in public thought. In recent years there has been a noticeable return of the greater magazines to consideration of the moral phases of the Scripture. That has been inevitably connected with the development of a social sense which condemns men for their evil courses because of their damage to society. The Old Testament prophets are living their lives again in these days, and the more thoughtful men are being driven back to them for the great principles on which they may live safely.

The third agency which needs to magnify the Bible is the school. The accent which it will choose will naturally be the literary value of the Bible, though it will not overlook its moral value as well. Incidental references heretofore have suggested the importance of religion in a

democracy. But there are none of the great branches of the teaching of the schools, public or private, which do not involve the Bible. It is impossible to teach history fairly and fully without a frank recognition of the influence of the Bible. Study the Reformation, the Puritan movement, the Pilgrim journeys, the whole of early American history! We can leave the Bible out only by trifling with the facts. Certainly literature cannot be taught without it. And if it is the purpose of the schools to develop character and moral life, then there is high authority for saying that the Bible ought to have place.

Forty years ago Mr. Huxley, in his essay on "The School Boards: What They Can Do, and What They May Do," laid a broad foundation for thinking at this point, and his words bear quoting at some length: "I have always been strongly in favor of secular education, in the sense of education without theology; but I must confess I have been no less seriously perplexed to know by what practical measures the religious feeling, which is the essential basis of conduct, was to be kept up, in the present utterly chaotic state of opinion on these matters, without the use of the Bible. The pagan moralists lack life and color, and even the noble stoic, Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, is too high and refined for

an ordinary child. Take the Bible as a whole; make the severest deductions which fair criticism can dictate for shortcomings and positive errors; eliminate, as a sensible lay teacher would do if left to himself, all that is not desirable for children to occupy themselves with; and there still remains in this old literature a vast residuum of moral beauty and grandeur. And then consider the great historical fact that, for three centuries, this Book has been woven into the life of all that is best and noblest in English history; that it has become the national epic of Britain, and is as familiar to noble and simple, from John-o'-Groat's House to Land's End, as Dante and Tasso once were to the Italians; that it is written in the noblest and purest English, and abounds in exquisite beauties of mere literary form; and, finally, that it forbids the veriest hind who never left his village to be ignorant of the existence of other countries and other civilizations, and of a great past, stretching back to the furthest limits of the oldest nations of the world. By the study of what other book could children be so much humanized and made to feel that each figure in that vast historical procession fills, like themselves, but a momentary space in the interval between two eternities; and earns the blessings or the curses of all time,

according to its effort to do good and hate evil, even as they also are earning their payment for their work? On the whole, then, I am in favor of reading the Bible, with such grammatical, geographical, and historical explanations by a lay teacher as may be needful, with rigid exclusion of any further theological teaching than that contained in the Bible itself." Mr. Huxley is an Englishman, though, as Professor Moulton says, "We divide him between England and America." But Professor Moulton himself is very urgent in this same matter. If the classics of Greece and Rome are in the nature of ancestral literature, an equal position belongs to the literature of the Bible. "If our intellect and imagination have been formed by Greece, have we not in similar fashion drawn our moral and emotional training from Hebrew thought?" It is one of the curiosities of our civilization that we are content to go for our liberal education to literatures which morally are at opposite poles from ourselves; literatures in which the most exalted tone is often an apotheosis of the sensuous, which degrade divinity, not only to the human level, but to the lowest level of humanity. "It is surely good that our youth during the formative period should have displayed to them, in a literary dress as brilliant as that of Greek literature,

a people dominated by an utter passion for righteousness, a people whose ideas of purity, of infinite good, of universal order, of faith in the irresistible downfall of moral evil, moved to a poetic passion as fervid and speech as musical as when Sappho sang of love or Eschylus thundered his deep notes of destiny."[1]

But there is a leading American voice which will speak in that behalf, in President Nicholas Murray Butler, of Columbia University. In his address as President of the National Educational Association, President Butler makes strong plea for the reading of the Bible even in public schools. "His reason had no connection with religion. It was based on altogether different ground. He regarded an acquaintance with the Bible as absolutely indispensable to the proper understanding of English literature." It is unfortunate in the extreme, he thought, that so many young men are growing up without that knowledge of the Bible which every one must have if he means to be capable of the greatest literary pleasure and appreciation of the literature of his own people. Not only the allusions, but the whole tone and bias of many English authors will become to one who is ignorant of the Bible most difficult and even impossible of comprehension.

[1] *Literary Study of the Bible*, passim.

The difficulties of calling public schools to this task appear at once. It would be monstrous if they should be sectarian or proselytizing. But the Bible is not a sectarian Book. It is the Book of greatest literature. It is the Book of mightiest morals. It is governing history. It is affecting literature as nothing else has done. A thousand pities that any petty squabbling or differences of opinion should prevent the young people in the schools from realizing the grandeur and beauty of it!

But the final and most important agency which will magnify the influence of the Bible must necessarily be the home. It will gather up all its traits, religious, moral, and literary. Here is the fundamental opportunity and the fundamental obligation. Robert Burns was right in finding the secret of Scotia's power in such scenes as those of "The Cottar's Saturday Night." One can almost see Carlyle going back to his old home at Ecclefechan and standing outside to hear his old mother making a prayer in his behalf. A newspaper editorial of recent date says this decay of literary allusion is traceable in part to the gradual abandonment of family prayers. Answering President Butler, it is urged that it is not so important that the Bible be in the public schools as that it get back again

into the homes. "Thorough acquaintance with the Bible is desirable; it should be fostered. The person who will have to foster it, though," says this writer, "is not the teacher, but the parent. The parent is the person whom Dr. Butler should try to convert." Well, while there may be differences about the school, there can be none about the place of the Bible in the home. It needs to be bound up with the earliest impressions and intertwined with those impressions as they deepen and extend.

So, by the Church, which will accent its religious value; by the press, which will accent its moral power; by the school, which will spread its literary influence; and by the home, which will realize all three and make it seem a vital concern from the beginning of life, the Bible will be put and held in the place of power to-day which it has had in the years that are gone, and will steadily gain greater power.

THE END